

U. S. MARINE OPERATIONS IN KOREA

1950-1953

VOLUME III

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

by

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and

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Based on Research by

K. JACK BAUER, PHD.



Historical Branch, G-3

Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps

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Volume I, "The Pusan Perimeter"

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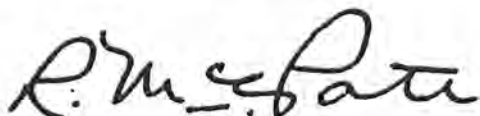
Foreword

THE BREAKOUT of the 1st Marine Division from the Chosin Reservoir area will long be remembered as one of the inspiring epics of our history. It is also worthy of consideration as a campaign in the best tradition of American military annals.

The ability of the Marines to fight their way through twelve Chinese divisions over a 78-mile mountain road in sub-zero weather cannot be explained by courage and endurance alone. It also owed to the high degree of professional forethought and skill as well as the "uncommon valor" expected of all Marines.

A great deal of initiative was required of unit commanders, and tactics had to be improvised at times on the spur of the moment to meet unusual circumstances. But in the main, the victory was gained by firm discipline and adherence to time-tested military principles. Allowing for differences in arms, indeed, the Marines of 1950 used much the same fundamental tactics as those employed on mountain roads by Xenophon and his immortal Ten Thousand when they cut their way through Asiatic hordes to the Black Sea in the year 401 B. C.

When the danger was greatest, the 1st Marine Division might have accepted an opportunity for air evacuation of troops after the destruction of weapons and supplies to keep them from falling into the enemy's hands. But there was never a moment's hesitation. The decision of the commander and the determination of all hands to come out fighting with all essential equipment were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.



R. MCC. PATE
*General, U. S. Marine Corps,
Commandant of the Marine Corps.*

Preface

THIS IS THE THIRD in a series of five volumes dealing with the operations of the United States Marine Corps in Korea during the period 2 August 1950 to 27 July 1953. Volume III presents in detail the operations of the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing as a part of X Corps, USA, in the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

The time covered in this book extends from the administrative landing at Wonsan on 26 October 1950 to the Hungnam evacuation which ended on Christmas Eve. The record would not be complete, however, without reference to preceding high-level strategic decisions in Washington and Tokyo which placed the Marines in northeast Korea and governed their employment.

Credit is due the U. S. Army and Navy for support on land and sea, and the U. S. Navy and Air Force for support in the air. But since this is primarily a Marine Corps history, the activities of other services are described here only in sufficient detail to show Marine operations in their proper perspective.

The ideal of the authors has been to relate the epic of the Chosin Reservoir breakout from the viewpoint of the man in the foxhole as well as the senior officer at the command post. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the 142 Marine officers and men who gave so generously of their time by contributing 338 narratives, letters, and interviews. In many instances this material was so detailed that some could not be used, because of space limitations. But all will go into the permanent Marine archives for the benefit of future historians.

Thanks are also extended to the Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as Marine officers, who offered valuable comments and criticisms after reading the preliminary drafts of chapters. Without this assistance no accurate and detailed account could have been written.

The maps contained in this volume, as in the previous ones, have been prepared by the Reproduction Section, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. The advice of officers of the Current History Branch of the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, has also been of aid in the preparation of these pages.



E. W. SNEDEKER

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CHAPTER I

Problems Of Victory

Decision to Cross the 38th Parallel—Surrender Message to NKPA Forces—MacArthur's Strategy of Celerity—Logistical Problems of Advance—Naval Missions Prescribed—X Corps Relieved at Seoul—Joint Planning for Wonsan Landing

IT IS A LESSON of history that questions of how to use a victory can be as difficult as problems of how to win one. This truism was brought home forcibly to the attention of the United Nations (UN) heads, both political and military, during the last week of September 1950. Already, with the fighting still in progress, it had become evident that the UN armies were crushing the forces of Communism in Korea, as represented by the remnants of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA).

Only a month before, such a result would have seemed a faint and unrealistic hope. Late in August the hard-pressed Eighth U. S. Army in Korea (EUSAK) was defending that southeast corner of the peninsula known as the Pusan Perimeter.

"Nothing fails like success," runs a cynical French proverb, and the truth of this adage was demonstrated militarily when the dangerously over-extended NKPA forces paid the penalty of their tenuous supply line on 15 September 1950. That was the date of the X Corps amphibious assault at Inchon, with the 1st Marine Division as landing force spearheading the advance on Seoul.

X Corps was the strategic anvil of a combined operation as the Eighth Army jumped off next day to hammer its way out of the Pusan Perimeter and pound northward toward Seoul. When elements of the two UN forces met just south of the Republic of Korea (ROK)

capital on 26 September, the routed NKPA remnants were left only the hope of escaping northward across the 38th parallel.¹

The bold strategic plan leading up to this victory—one of the most decisive ever won by U. S. land, sea and air forces—was largely the concept of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, USA, who was Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command (CINCUNC) as well as U. S. Commander in Chief in the Far East (CINCFE). It was singularly appropriate, therefore, that he should have returned the political control of the battle-scarred ROK capital to President Syngman Rhee on 29 September. Marine officers who witnessed the ceremony have never forgotten the moving spectacle of the American general and the fiery Korean patriot, both past their 70th birthdays, as they stood together under the shell-shattered skylight of the Government Palace.²

Decision to Cross the 38th Parallel

"Where do we go from here?" would hardly have been an oversimplified summary of the questions confronting UN leaders when it became apparent that the NKPA forces were defeated. In order to appraise the situation, it is necessary to take a glance at preceding events.

As early as 19 July, the dynamic ROK leader had made it plain that he did not propose to accept the pre-invasion *status quo*. He served notice that his forces would unify Korea by driving to the Manchurian border. Since the Communists had violated the 38th Parallel, the aged Rhee declared, this imaginary demarcation between North and South no longer existed. He pointed out that the sole purpose of the line in the first place had been to divide Soviet and American occupation zones after World War II, in order to facilitate the Japanese surrender and pave the way for a democratic Korean government.

In May 1948, such a government had come about in South Korea by popular elections, sponsored and supervised by the UN. These elections had been scheduled for all Korea but were prohibited by

¹ The story of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and Marine Aircraft Group 33 in the Pusan Perimeter has been told in Volume I of this series, and Volume II deals with the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in the Inchon-Seoul operation.

² Col C. W. Harrison, interview (interv) 22 Nov 55. Unless otherwise noted, all interviews have been by the authors.

the Russians in their zone. The Communists not only ignored the National Assembly in Seoul, but also arranged their own version of a governing body in Pyongyang two months later. The so-called North Korean People's Republic thus became another of the Communist puppet states set up by the USSR.

That the United Nations did not recognize the North Korean state in no way altered its very real status as a politico-military fact. For obvious reasons, then, all UN decisions relating to the Communist state had to take into account the possibility of reactions by Soviet Russia and Red China, which shared Korea's northern boundary.

At the outbreak of the conflict on 25 June 1950, the UN Security Council had, by a vote of 9-0, called for an immediate end to the fighting and the withdrawal of all NKPA forces to the 38th Parallel.³ This appeal having gone unheeded, the Council on 27 June recommended ". . . that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."⁴ It was the latter authorization, supplemented by another resolution on 7 July, that led to military commitments by the United States and to the appointment of General MacArthur as over-all UN Commander.

These early UN actions constituted adequate guidance in Korea until the Inchon landing and EUSAK's counteroffensive turned the tide. With the NKPA in full retreat, however, and UN Forces rapidly approaching the 38th Parallel, the situation demanded re-evaluation, including supplemental instructions to the military commander. The question arose as to whether the North Koreans should be allowed sanctuary beyond the parallel, possibly enabling them to reorganize for new aggression. It will be recalled that Syngman Rhee had already expressed his thoughts forcibly in this connection on 19 July; and the ROK Army translated thoughts into action on 1 October by crossing the border.

The UN, in its 7 July resolution, having authorized the United States to form a unified military force and appoint a supreme commander in Korea, it fell upon the Administration of President Harry S. Truman to translate this dictum into workaday reality. Aiding the

³ US Dept of State, *Guide to the UN in Korea* (Washington, 1951). Yugoslavia abstained from the vote, and the USSR, then boycotting the Council, was absent.

⁴ *Ibid.*

EIGHTH ARMY ADVANCES AND RESTRAINING LINES

--- Line of 27 Sept

— Line of 17 Oct
MAP-1



Chief Executive and his Cabinet in this delicate task with its far-reaching implications were the Joint U. S. Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Army member, General J. Lawton Collins, also functioned as Executive Agent of JCS for the United Nations Command in Korea, thus keeping intact the usual chain of command from the Army Chief of Staff to General MacArthur, who now served both the U. S. and UN.⁵

Late in August, two of the Joint Chiefs, General Collins and Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, USN, had flown to Japan to discuss the forthcoming Inchon landing with General MacArthur. In the course of the talks, it was agreed that CINCUNC's objective should be the *destruction* of the North Korean forces, and that ground operations should be extended beyond the 38th Parallel to achieve this goal. The agreement took the form of a recommendation, placed before Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson on 7 September.⁶

A week later, JCS informed MacArthur that President Truman had approved certain "conclusions" relating to the Korean conflict, but that these were not yet to be construed as final decisions. Among other things, the Chief Executive accepted the reasoning that UN Forces had a legal basis for engaging the NKPA north of the Parallel. MacArthur would plan operations accordingly, JCS directed, but would carry them out only after being granted explicit permission.⁷

The historic authorization, based on recommendations of the National Security Council to President Truman, reached General Headquarters (GHQ), Tokyo, in a message dispatched by JCS on 27 September:

Your military objective is the destruction of the North Korean Armed Forces. In attaining this objective you are authorized to conduct military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations north of the 38th Parallel in Korea, provided that at the time of such operations there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. . . .

The lengthy message abounded in paragraphs of caution, reflecting the desire of both the UN and the United States to avoid a general war. Not discounting the possibility of intervention by Russia or Red China, JCS carefully outlined MacArthur's courses of action for sev-

⁵ Maj J. F. Schnabel, USA, Comments on preliminary manuscript (Comments).

⁶ JCS memo to Secretary of Defense (SecDef), 7 Sep 50. Unless otherwise stated, copies of all messages cited are on file in Historical Branch, HQMC.

⁷ JCS message (msg) WAR 91680, 15 Sep 50; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, 2 vols (Garden City, 1955-1956), II, 359.

eral theoretical situations. Moreover, he was informed that certain broad restrictions applied regardless of developments:

. . . under no circumstances, however, will your forces cross the Manchurian or USSR borders of Korea and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean Ground Forces will be used in the northeast provinces bordering the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border. Furthermore, support of your operations north or south of the 38th parallel will not include Air or Naval action against Manchuria or against USSR territory. . . .⁸

Thus MacArthur had the green light, although the signal was shaded by various qualifications. On 29 September, the new Secretary of Defense, George C. Marshall, told him in a message, ". . . We want you to feel unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of 38th parallel. . . ."⁹

Surrender Message to NKPA Forces

Meanwhile, a step was taken by the U. S. Government on 27 September in the hope that hostilities might end without much further loss or risk for either side. By dispatch, JCS authorized MacArthur to announce, at his discretion, a suggested surrender message to the NKPA.¹⁰ Framed by the U. S. State Department, the message was broadcast on 1 October and went as follows:

To: The Commander-in-chief, North Korean Forces. The early and total defeat and complete destruction of your Armed Forces and war making potential is now inevitable. In order that the decision of the United Nations may be carried out with a minimum of further loss of life and destruction of property, I, as the United Nations Commander-in-Chief, call upon you and the forces under your command, in whatever part of Korea situated, forthwith to lay down your arms and cease hostilities under such military super-

⁸ JCS msg 92801, 27 Sep 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 360; MajGen Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur, His Rendezvous with History* (New York, 1956), 397. Commenting on the JCS authorization Gen MacArthur stated, "My directive from the JCS on 27 September establishing my military objective as '... the destruction of the North Korean Armed Forces' and in the accomplishment thereof authorizing me to '... conduct military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations north of the 38th parallel in Korea. . . ' made it mandatory rather than discretionary . . . that the UN Forces operate north of that line against enemy remnants situated in the north. Moreover, all plans governing operations north of that Parallel were designed to implement the resolution passed by the UN General assembly on 7 October 1950, and were specifically approved by the JCS. Indeed, the military objectives assigned by the JCS, and the military-political objectives established by said resolution of the UN could have been accomplished in no other way." Gen D. MacArthur letter (ltr) to MajGen E. W. Snedeker, 24 Feb 56.

⁹ JCS msg 92985, 29 Sep 50. For a differing interpretation see Whitney, *MacArthur*, 398.

¹⁰ JCS msg 92762, 27 Sep 50.

vision as I may direct and I call upon you at once to liberate all United Nations prisoners of war and civilian internees under your control and to make adequate provision for their protection, care, maintenance, and immediate transportation to such places as I indicate.

North Korean forces, including prisoners of war in the hands of the United Nations Command, will continue to be given the care indicated by civilized custom and practice and permitted to return to their homes as soon as practicable.

I shall anticipate your early decision upon this opportunity to avoid the further useless shedding of blood and destruction of property.¹¹

The surrender broadcast evoked no direct reply from Kim Il Sung, Premier of North Korea and Commander in Chief of the NKPA. Instead, the reaction of the Communist bloc came ominously from another quarter. Two days after MacArthur's proclamation, Red China's Foreign Minister Chou En-Lai informed K. M. Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador in Peiping, that China would intervene in the event UN forces crossed the 38th Parallel. He added, however, that such action would not be forthcoming if only ROK troops entered North Korea.¹²

It will be recalled that the JCS authorization of 27 September permitted operations north of the Parallel¹³ . . . provided that at the time of such operations there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces, *no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. . .*¹³ In view of the last two provisos, MacArthur's plans for crossing the border could conceivably have been cancelled after Chou's announcement. But optimism over the course of the war ran high among the United Nations at this time, and CINUNC shortly received supplemental authority from both the UN and JCS—the one establishing legal grounds for an incursion into North Korea, the other reaffirming military concurrence at the summit. In a resolution adopted on 7 October, the United Nations directed that

¹¹ CINUNC msg to CinC North Korean Forces, 1 Oct 59, in EUSAK *War Diary* (WD), 1 Oct 50, Sec II; JCS msg 92762, 27 Sep 50.

¹² US Ambassador, England msg to Secretary of State, 3 Oct 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 361–362. The information was forwarded to Tokyo but MacArthur later claimed that he had never been informed of it. *Military Situation in the Far East. Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate Eighty-second Congress, First Session, To Conduct an Inquiry into the Military Situation in the Far East and the facts surrounding the relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur from his assignments in that area* (Washington, 1951, 5 vols.), (hereafter *MacArthur Hearings*), 109.

¹³ JCS msg 92801, 27 Sep 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 360; Whitney, *MacArthur*, 397. Italics supplied.

All appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea and all constituent acts be taken . . . for the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Government in the Sovereign State of Korea. . . .¹⁴

Since the enemy had ignored his surrender ultimatum, MacArthur could attend to the UN objectives only by occupying North Korea militarily and imposing his will. JCS, therefore, on 9 October amplified its early instructions to the Commander in Chief as follows:

Hereafter, in the event of open or covert employment anywhere in Korea of major Chinese Communist units, without prior announcement, you should continue the action as long as, in your judgment, action by forces now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success. In any case you will obtain authorization from Washington prior to taking any military actions against objectives in Chinese territory.¹⁵

MacArthur's Strategy of Celerity

Anticipating his authority for crossing the 38th Parallel, CINCUNC on 26 September had directed his Joint Special Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) to develop a plan for operations north of the border. He stipulated that Eighth Army should make the main effort in either the west or the east, and that however this was resolved, there should be an amphibious envelopment on the opposite coast—at Chinnampo, Wonsan, or elsewhere.¹⁶ Despite recommendations of key staff members, MacArthur did not place X Corps under EUSAK command for the forthcoming campaign but retained General Almond's unit as a separate tactical entity under GHQ.¹⁷

JSPOG, headed by Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, MacArthur's G-3, rapidly fitted an earlier staff study into the framework of CINCUNC's directive. And the following day, 27 September, a proposed Operation Plan (OpnPlan) 9-50 was laid before the commander in chief.¹⁸ This detailed scheme of action evolved from two basic assumptions: (1) that the bulk of the NKPA had already been

¹⁴ Resolution of 7 Oct 50 in *Guide to the UN in Korea*, 20.

¹⁵ JCS msg 93709, 9 Oct 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 362; Whitney, *MacArthur*, 404.

¹⁶ C/S FECOM memo to JSPOG, 26 Sep 50. Copy at Office of The Chief of Military History (OCMH).

¹⁷ Maj J. F. Schnabel, *The Korean Conflict: Policy, Planning, Direction*. MS at OCMH. See also: Capt M. Blumenson, "MacArthur's Divided Command," *Army*, vii, no. 4 (Nov 56), 38-44, 65.

¹⁸ Schnabel, *The Korean Conflict*.

destroyed; and (2) that neither the USSR nor Red China would intervene, covertly or openly.

Eighth Army, according to plan, would attack across the 38th Parallel, directing its main effort in the west, along the axis Kaesong-Sariwon-Pyongyang (see Map 1). JSPOG designated the latter city—capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea—as final objective of the first phase. Further, it recommended that EUSA's drive begin in mid-October, to be followed within a week by a X Corps amphibious landing at Wonsan on the east coast. After establishing a beachhead, Almond's force would attack 125 road miles westward through the Pyongyang-Wonsan corridor and link up with General Walker's army, thereby trapping North Korean elements falling back from the south.¹⁹

JSPOG suggested that both commands should then advance north to the line Chongju-Kunuri-Yongwon-Hamhung-Hungnam, ranging roughly from 50 to 100 miles below the Manchurian border. Only ROK elements would proceed beyond the restraining line, in keeping with the spirit and letter of the 27 September dispatch from JCS.²⁰

Major General Doyle O. Hickey, acting as CINUNC's chief of staff during General Almond's tour in the field, approved the JSPOG draft of 28 September. It thereby became OpnPlan 9-50 officially. MacArthur forwarded a summary to JCS the same day, closing his message with this reassurance:

There is no indication at present of entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces.²¹

Within three days, he received word from the Joint Chiefs that they approved his plan.²² On 2 October it became the official operation order for the attack.²³

Logistical Problems of Advance

On 29 September, the day before he received the JCS endorsement of his plan, General MacArthur arrived in Seoul to officiate at the cere-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, and CinCFE OpnPlan 9-50. Copy at OCMH.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ CinCFE msg C 64805, 28 Sep 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 361; Whitney, *MacArthur*, 397-398.

²² JCS disp 92975, 29 Sep 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 361; Whitney, *MacArthur*, 398.

All dates in the narrative and in footnotes are given as of the place of origin of the action. Thus, 29 September in Washington was actually the 30th in Tokyo.

²³ UNC Operation Order (OpnO) 2, 2 Oct 50.

mony restoring control of South Korea to the legal ROK government. During the visit, he met with the principals named in the Task Organization of OpnPlan 9-50:

Eighth U. S. Army
 Naval Forces Far East
 Far East Air Forces (FEAF)

LtGen Walton H. Walker, USA
 VAdm C. Turner Joy, USN
 LtGen George E. Stratemeyer,
 USAF

X Corps

MajGen Edward M. Almond, USA

Missing from the top-level conference, Major General Walter L. Weible, USA, of the Japan Logistical Command, probably was already aware of things to come.²⁴

MacArthur outlined his concept of operations in North Korea to those present. He set 20 October as D-Day for the Wonsan amphibious assault by the 1st Marine Division, which, with all X Corps Troops, would embark for the operation from Inchon. The 7th Infantry Division, also a part of X Corps, would motor 200 miles to Pusan and there load out for an administrative landing behind the Marines.²⁵

Initial overland routing of the 7th Division was made necessary by problems arising out of Inchon's limited port facilities. General MacArthur gave EUSAK the logistic responsibility for all UN Forces in Korea, including X Corps. To carry out this charge, General Walker could rely on only two harbors, Pusan and Inchon. There were no other ports in South Korea capable of supporting large-scale military operations. Meeting the tight Wonsan schedule would require that X Corps have immediate priority over the whole of Inchon's capacity, even with the 7th Division being shunted off on Pusan. And it still remained for Walker to mount and sustain Eighth Army's general offensive *before* the Wonsan landing!

In the light of logistical considerations, then, Wonsan had more than mere tactical significance as the objective of X Corps. Its seizure would open up the principal east-coast port of Korea, together with vital new road and rail junctions. But while MacArthur had decided on an amphibious assault by a separate tactical unit as the proper stroke, there existed a school of dissenters among his closest advisers. Generals Hickey and Wright had recommended that X Corps be incorporated into EUSAK at the close of the Inchon-Seoul Operation. Major General George L. Eberle, MacArthur's G-4, held that supplying X Corps in North Korea would be simpler if that unit were a part of

²⁴ LtGen E. A. Almond, USA, (Ret.) ltr to Col J. Meade, USA, 14 Jun 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Eighth Army. And General Almond himself, while hardly a dissenter, had expected his corps to be placed under General Walker's command after the Seoul fighting.²⁶

Naval Missions Prescribed

Logistical problems were magnified by the tight embarkation schedule laid out for the amphibious force. In submitting its proposed plan for North Korean operations to General MacArthur on 27 September, JSPOG had listed the following "bare minimum time requirements:"

For assembling assault shipping	6 days
For planning	4 days
For loading	6 days
For sailing to Wonsan	4 days

Thus it was estimated that the 1st Marine Division could assault Wonsan 10 days after receiving the order to load out of Inchon, provided that shipping had already been assembled and planning accomplished concurrently.²⁷

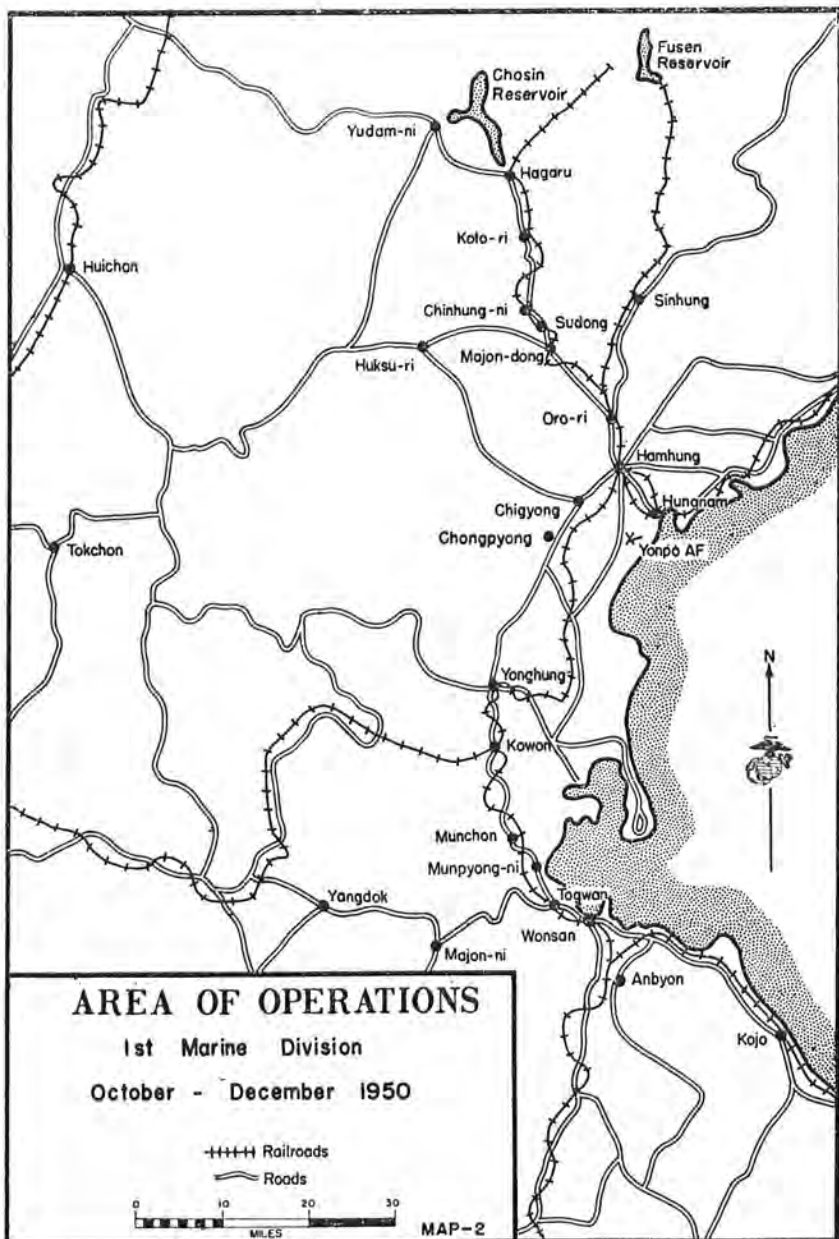
Following CINCUNC's meeting in the capitol building on the 29th, General Almond called a conference of division commanders and staff members at his X Corps Headquarters in Ascom City, near Inchon. MacArthur's strategy was outlined to the assembled officers, so that planning could commence on the division level. Almond set 15 October as D-Day for the Wonsan landing. He based this target date on the assumption that Eighth Army would pass through and relieve X Corps on 3 October, the date on which the necessary shipping was to begin arriving at Inchon.²⁸

On 29 September, the 1st Marine Division was still committed tactically above Seoul, two regiments blocking and one attacking. If the

²⁶ *Ibid.*; Schnabel, *The Korean Conflict*; Blumenson, "MacArthur's Divided Command." Gen MacArthur stated: "If such a dissension existed it was never brought to my attention. To the contrary, the decision to retain as a function of GHQ command and coordination between Eighth Army and X Corps until such time as a juncture between the two forces had been effected was, so far as I know, based upon the unanimous thinking of the senior members of my staff . . ." MacArthur ltr, 24 Feb 56. Gen Wright has stated: "Neither General Hickey, General Eberle, nor I objected to the plan, but we did feel that X Corps should have been made part of the Eighth Army immediately after the close of the Inchon-Seoul operation." MajGen E. K. Wright, USA, ltr to MajGen E. W. Snedeker, 16 Feb 56.

²⁷ JSPOG memo to C/S, FECOM: "Plans for future operations," 27 Sep 50. Copy at OCMH.

²⁸ 1stMarDiv Special Action Report for the Wonsan-Hambung-Chosin Reservoir Operation, 8 Oct-15 Dec 50 (hereafter 1stMarDiv SAR), 10.



first vessels began arriving at Inchon on 3 October, the assault shipping would not be completely assembled until the 8th, according to the JSPOG estimate. Four days would be required to get to the objective, leaving two days, instead of the planned six, for outloading the landing force. Neither Major General Oliver P. Smith, Commanding General (CG) 1stMarDiv, nor his staff regarded this as a realistic schedule.²⁹

The Marine officers came away from the conference without knowledge of the types and numbers of ships that would be made available to the division. And since they had no maps of the objective area and no intelligence data whatever, it was manifestly impossible to lay firm plans along either administrative or tactical lines.³⁰

Vice Admiral Joy, Commander Naval Forces Far East (ComNavFE), issued his instructions on 1 October in connection with the forthcoming operations. To Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble's Joint Task Force 7 (JTF-7), which had carried out the Inchon attack, he gave these missions:

1. To maintain a naval blockade of Korea's East coast south of Chongjin.
2. To furnish naval gunfire and air support to Eighth Army as directed.
3. To conduct pre-D-Day naval operations for the Wonsan landing as required.
4. To load and transport X Corps to Wonsan, providing cover and support en route.
5. To seize by amphibious assault, occupy, and defend a beachhead in the Wonsan area on D-Day.
6. To provide naval gunfire, air, and initial logistical support to X Corps at Wonsan until relieved.³¹

Admiral Joy's directive also warned: "The strong probability exists that the ports and possible landing beaches under control of the North Koreans have been recently mined. The sighting of new mines floating in the area indicates that mines are being seeded along the coast."³²

X Corps Relieved at Seoul

The related events, decisions, and plans of September 1950 had unfolded with startling rapidity. Before the scattered UN forces could

²⁹ 1stMarDiv SAR, 10 and MajGen Oliver P. Smith, *Notes on the Operations of the 1st Marine Division during the First Nine Months of the Korean War, 1950-51* (MS), (hereafter Smith, *Notes*), 370-371.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ ComNavFE *OpnPlan* 113-50. Copy at OCMH.

³² *Ibid.*, B, 11.

shift from one phase of operations to another, a transitional gap developed during the early days of October. Orders might flow forth in abundance, but not until MacArthur's land, sea and air forces wound up one campaign could they begin another. Thus, from the standpoint of Marine operations, the first week of October is more a story of the Inchon-Seoul action than of preparations for the Wonsan landing.

On 2 October, when Eighth Army commenced the relief of X Corps, General Almond ordered the 7th Infantry Division to begin displacing to Pusan by motor and rail.³³ There was as yet no such respite for the 1st Marine Division, which on the same day lost 16 killed in action (KIA) and 81 wounded (WIA). Practically all of the casualties were taken by the 7th Regiment, then approaching Uijongbu on the heels of the enemy.³⁴

Despite the limited planning data in the hands of the 1st Marine Division, General Smith's staff put a cautious foot forward on 3 October.³⁵ Word of the pending Wonsan operation went out by message to all subordinate units, with a tentative task organization indicating the formation of three Regimental Combat Teams (RCTs).

The 1st and 7th Marines were earmarked to launch the amphibious attack. Each would plan on the basis of employing two battalions in the assault. These battalions were to embark on LSTs and hit the beach in LVTs. All tactical units were to combat-load out of Inchon. And although still uninformed as to available shipping, the Marine planners named likely embarkation groups and listed tentative arrangements for loading tanks and amphibious vehicles.³⁶

The following day saw the publication of X Corps OpnO 4, specifying subordinate unit missions. The 7th Infantry Division, together with the 92d and 96th Field Artillery (FA) Battalions, was instructed to mount out of Pusan and to land at Wonsan on order (see Map 2). These tasks were assigned to the 1st Marine Division:

1. Report immediately to the Attack Force Commander (Commander, Amphibious Group One) of the Seventh Fleet as the landing force for the Wonsan attack.

³³ X Corps OpnO 3, 2 Oct 50.

³⁴ MajGen Oliver P. Smith: *Chronicle of the Operations of the 1st Marine Division During the First Nine Months of the Korean War, 1950-1951* (MS), (hereafter, Smith, *Chronicle*), 54.

³⁵ Gen Wright stated, "There was definitely *not* a complete lack of planning data. I doubt if any operation ever had more planning data available. It may not have been in General Smith's hands on 3 October, but it was available." Wright ltr, 16 Feb 56.

³⁶ CG 1stMarDiv msg to Subordinate Units: "Planning Information," 3 Oct 50.

2. Seize and secure X Corps base of operations at Wonsan, protect the Wonsan Airfield, and continue such operations ashore as assigned.
3. Furnish logistic support for all forces ashore until relieved by Corps Shore Party.³⁷

As Almond's order went out for distribution on 4 October, EUSAK's 1st Cavalry Division, bound for Kaesong, passed through the 5th Marines northwest of Seoul. Simultaneously, the II ROK Corps began assembling along the road to Uijongbu, captured by the 7th Marines the previous day.³⁸

After 20 days in the line, the weary battalions of the 5th Marines retired on 5 October across the Han River to an assembly area at Inchon. They were followed on the 6th by the 1st Regiment, and on the next day by the 7th Marines. The withdrawal of the latter unit completed the relief of X Corps, and General Almond's command officially reverted to GHQ Reserve.³⁹

October 7th also marked the displacement of the 1st Marine Division command post (CP) to Inchon, where planning and reality had finally merged to the extent that preparations for Wonsan could begin in earnest. Two days earlier, Vice Admiral Struble had re-created JTF-7 out of his Seventh Fleet; and by publication of his OpnO 16-50 on the same date, 5 October, he set in motion the operational elements involved in the projected amphibious envelopment. His new task organization, almost identical to that which had carried out the Inchon Operation with historic dispatch, was as follows:

TF 95 (Advance Force)	RAdm Allen E. Smith
TG 95.2 (Covering & Support)	RAdm Charles C. Hartman
TG 95.6 (Minesweeping)	Capt Richard T. Spofford
TF 90 (Attack Force)	RAdm James H. Doyle
TF 79 (Logistical Support Force)	Capt Bernard L. Austin
TF 77 (Fast Carrier Force)	RAdm Edward C. Ewen
TG 96.8 (Escort Carrier Group)	RAdm Richard W. Ruble
TG 96.2 (Patrol & Reconnaissance)	RAdm George R. Henderson
TG 70.1 (Flagship Group)	Capt Irving T. Duke

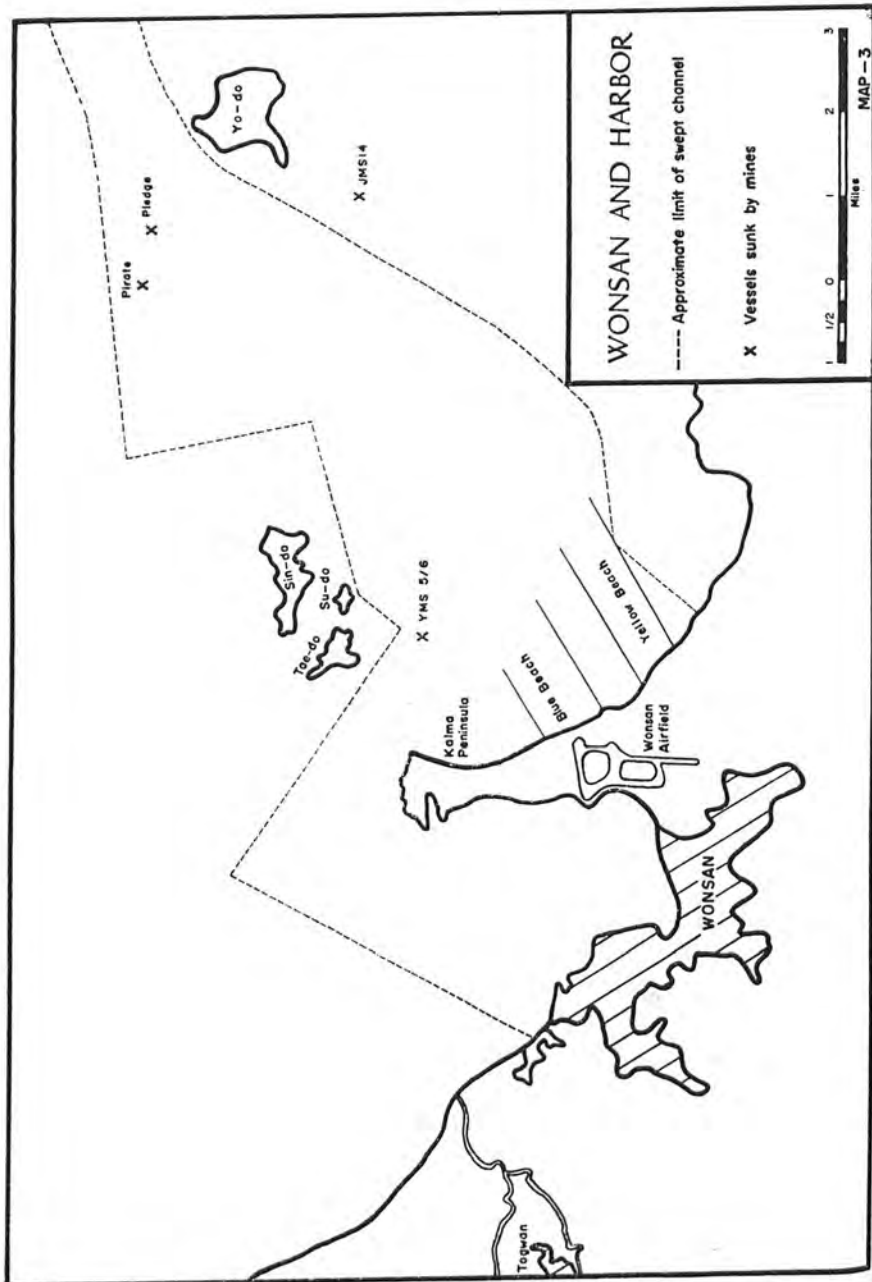
Struble, who had directed the Inchon assault from the bridge of the USS *Rochester*, would now fly his flag in the recently arrived USS *Missouri*, the sole American battleship in commission at this early stage of the Korean war.⁴⁰

³⁷ Special Report 1stMarDiv, in CinCPacFlt *Interim Evaluation Rpt #1*, annex DD, 11; 1stMarDiv *Historical Diary (HD)*, Oct 50; X Corps *OpnO 4*, 4 Oct 50.

³⁸ Smith, *Chronicle*, 54.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁰ ComSeventhFlt *OpnO 16-50*, 5 Oct 50.



WONSAN AND HARBOR

----- Approximate limit of swept channel

X Vessels sunk by mines



Joint Planning for Wonsan Landing

The Seventh Fleet directive of 5 October dispatched both the Fast Carrier and the Patrol and Reconnaissance Forces of JTF-7 on the usual search and attack missions preliminary to an amphibious assault. Task Force 77, consisting of the carriers *Boxer*, *Leyte*, *Philippine Sea* and *Valley Forge*, escorted by a light cruiser and 24 destroyers, was under orders to direct 50 per cent of the preparatory air effort against the local defenses of Wonsan. Simultaneously, the Advance Force, with its cruisers, destroyers and mine sweeping units, would close in to shell the target and wrest control of the offshore waters from the enemy.⁴¹

Topographic and hydrographic studies made available to the Attack and Landing Forces showed Wonsan to be a far more accessible target than Inchon (see Map 3). Nestling in the southwestern corner of Yonghung Bay, 80 miles above the 38th Parallel, the seaport offers one of the best natural harbors in Korea. A vast anchorage lies sheltered in the lee of Kalma Peninsula which, finger-like, juts northward from a bend in the coastline. Tides range from seven to 14 inches, fog is rare, and currents are weak. Docks can accommodate vessels drawing from 12 to 25 feet, and depths in the bay run from 10 fathoms in the outer anchorage to 15 feet just offshore.⁴²

Beaches around Wonsan are of moderate gradient, and the floor at water's edge consists of hard-packed sand. Though slightly wet landings might be expected, amphibious craft could easily negotiate any of the several desirable approaches. The coastal plain, ranging from 100 yards to two miles in depth, provides an acceptable lodgment area, but the seaward wall of the Taebaek mountain range renders inland egress difficult from the military standpoint.

In 1940, the population of Wonsan included 69,115 Koreans and 10,205 Japanese, the latter subsequently being repatriated to their homeland after World War II. Under the Japanese program of industrialization, the city had become Korea's petroleum refining center. The construction of port facilities, railways, and roads kept pace with the appearance of cracking plants, supporting industries, and huge storage areas.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² The description of Wonsan is based upon: GHQ, FECOM, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Theater Intelligence Division, Geographic Branch, *Terrain Study No. 6, Northern Korea*, sec v, 13-16; 1stMarDiv *OpnO 15-50*, annex B, sec 2, 1, 3, 0 Oct 50; and 1stMarDiv *SAR*, annex B (hereafter G-2 *SAR*), sec 2, 1.

Two airfields served the locale in 1950. One of these, situated on the coast about five miles north of the seaport, was of minor importance. The other, known as Wonsan Airfield, on Kalma Peninsula across the harbor, ranked high as a military prize. Spacious and accessible, it was an excellent base from which to project air coverage over all of Korea and the Sea of Japan. The Japanese first developed the field as an air adjunct to the naval base at Wonsan; but after World War II, a North Korean aviation unit moved in and used it until July 1950. Thereafter, with the skies dominated by the UN air arm, Wonsan Airfield temporarily lost all military significance. Its vacant runways, barracks, and dispersal areas were given only passing attention in the UN strategic bombing pattern, although the nearby industrial complex was demolished.

In addition to being situated on an excellent harbor, Wonsan is the eastern terminus of the Seoul-Wonsan corridor, the best of the few natural routes across the mountainous nation. This 115-mile road and rail passageway, once considered as a possible overland approach for X Corps, separates the northern and southern divisions of the Taebaek range, which rises precipitously from Korea's east coast to heights of 5000 feet. Railroads and highways, primitive by western standards, also trace the seaward base of the Taebaek Mountains to connect Wonsan with Hamhung in the north and Pusan far to the south. Still another road and railway leads to Pyongyang, 100 miles across the narrow neck of the peninsula in the western piedmont.

The climate along Korea's northeast coast is comparable to that of the lower Great Lakes region in the United States. Mean summer temperatures range between 80 and 88 degrees, although highs of 103 degrees have been recorded. Winter readings drop as low as -7 degrees, but the season is usually temperate with winds of low velocity. Despite light snowfalls and moderate icing, the period from October through March is best suited to military operations, for the heavy rains of spring and summer create difficulties on the gravel-topped roads.

Although members of Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group One (PhibGruOne) staff met with planners of the 1st Marine Division at Inchon early in October, it soon became apparent that the projected D-Day of 15 October could not be realized. Maps and intelligence data necessary for planning did not reach the Attack Force-Landing Force team until 6 October. The relief of X Corps by EUSAK was completed not on 3 October as General Almond had anticipated, but on the 7th

Moreover, the first transport vessels to reach Inchon ran behind schedule, and they had not been pre-loaded with a ten-day level of Class I, II, and V supplies, as was promised. Planning and outloading consequently started late and from scratch, with the result that D-Day ". . . was moved progressively back to a tentative date of 20 October."⁴³

⁴³ 1stMarDiv SAR, 10. The classes of supply are as follows: I, rations; II, supplies and equipment, such as normal clothing, weapons, vehicles, radios etc, for which specific allowances have been established; III, petroleum products, gasoline, oil and lubricants (POL); IV, special supplies and equipment, such as fortification and construction materials, cold weather clothing, etc, for which specific allowances have not been established; V, ammunition, pyrotechnics, explosives, etc.

CHAPTER II

The Wonsan Landing

ROK Army Captures Wonsan—Marine Loading and Embarkation—Two Weeks of Mine Sweeping—Operation Yo-Yo—Marine Air First at Objective—MacArthur Orders Advance to Border—Landing of 1st Marine Division

ON 6 OCTOBER 1950, after the arrival of the initial assault shipping at Inchon, General Smith ordered the 1st Marine Division to commence embarkation on the 8th. Similar instructions were issued by X Corps the following day.¹ Thus, the first troops and equipment were to be loaded even before the G-2 Section of the Landing Force could begin evaluating the enemy situation at the objective, since it was not until 8 October that the intelligence planners received X Corps' OpnO 4, published four days earlier. Summing up the outlook at the time, G-2 later reported:

Inasmuch as subordinate units of the Division were scheduled to embark aboard ship some time prior to 15 October 1950, it was immediately obvious that preliminary intelligence planning, with its attendant problems of collection, processing, and distribution of information, and the procurement and distribution of graphic aids, would be both limited and sketchy . . . Fortunately . . . the section [G-2] had been previously alerted on the projected operation, and while elements of the Division were yet engaged with the enemy at Uijongbu, had requested reproductions of some 100 copies of pertinent extracts of the JANIS (75) of Korea. Thus it was . . . that subordinate units would not be wholly unprepared for the coming operation.²

General Smith's OpnO 16-50, published on 10 October, climaxed the accelerated planning at Inchon. Worked out jointly by the staffs of PhibGruOne and the 1st Marine Division, this directive covered the Wonsan attack in detail and pinpointed subordinate unit responsibilities.

¹ 1stMarDiv Embarkation Order (*Embo*) 2-50, 6 Oct 50; Smith, *Notes*, 394.

² G-2 SAR, 2. JANIS is the abbreviation for Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies.

Kalma Peninsula was chosen as the point of assault, with two beaches YELLOW and BLUE, marked off on the eastern shore. Ten high-ground objectives described the semicircular arc of the beachhead, which focused on Wonsan and fanned out as far as five miles inland. The 1st and 7th Marines were to hit YELLOW and BLUE Beaches, respectively, and drive inland to their assigned objectives. The 5th, upon being ordered ashore, would assemble west of Wonsan, prepared for further operations. Two battalions of the 11th Marines were to land on call in direct support of the assault units, and the remainder of the artillery would initially function in general support.

Other subordinate units drew the usual assignments. The Reconnaissance Company, after landing on order, was to screen the Division's left flank by occupying specified objectives. Attached to the 1st and 7th Regiments respectively, the 5th and 3d Korean Marine Corps (KMC) Battalions would also go ashore on call.³

ROK Army Captures Wonsan

At 0815, 10 October, coincidentally with the publication of 1stMarDiv OpnO 16-50, troops of I ROK Corps, advancing rapidly up the east coast of Korea, entered Wonsan. By evening of the next day, the ROK 3d and Capital Divisions were mopping up minor resistance in the city and guarding the airfield on Kalma Peninsula.⁴

Overland seizure of the 1st Marine Division's amphibious objective did not come as a surprise either at GHQ in Tokyo or at General Smith's CP aboard the *Mount McKinley* in Inchon Harbor. General MacArthur had, in fact, prepared for this eventuality by considering an alternate assault landing at Hungnam, another major seaport, about 50 air miles north of Wonsan. On 8 October, therefore, the JSPO completed a modified version of CINCPAC OpnPlan 9-50. Eighth Army mission—the capture of Pyongyang—remained unchanged in this draft but X Corps would now land “. . . in the vicinity of Hungnam in order to cut the lines of communications north of Wonsan and envelop the North Korean forces in that area.”

Although the choice of a new objective seemed logical on the basis of the ROK Army's accomplishment, certain logistical obstacles⁴

³ 1stMarDiv OpnO 16-50, 10 Oct 50.

⁴ EUSAK War Diary Summary (WD Sum), Oct 50, 14-16.

once loomed in the path of the alternate plan. Not unaware of the most imposing of these, JSPOG commented:

The harbor at Wonsan cannot accommodate at docks the large vessels lifting the 7th Division. Since most of the amphibious type boats are carried on ships lifting the 1st Marine Division, the plans for off-loading the 7th Division will have to be revised.⁵

But the plans for off-loading the 7th Division could not be revised. If the Army unit was to land within a reasonable length of time, it would have to go in on the heels of the 1st Marine Division, using the same landing craft. If the ship-to-shore movement took place at Hungnam, the 7th Division would be ill-disposed for beginning its overland drive to Pyongyang as planned; for it would have to backtrack by land almost all the way to Wonsan. On the other hand, if the Army division landed at Wonsan while the Marines assaulted Hungnam, the Navy would be handicapped not only by the lack of landing craft but also by the problem of sweeping mines from both harbors simultaneously.

From the standpoint of Admiral Joy in Japan and Admiral Doyle in Korea, there was insufficient time for planning a new tactical deployment of X Corps at this late date. And the time-space handicap would be compounded by serious shortages of mine sweepers and intelligence information. Joy was unsuccessful on 8 October in his first attempt to dissuade MacArthur from the new idea. On the 9th, unofficial word of the pending change reached General Smith at Inchon, just as his staff wound up work on the draft for the Wonsan assault. ComNavFE persisted in his arguments with the commander in chief, however, with the final result that on 10 October the original plan for landing the whole X Corps at Wonsan was ordered into effect.⁶ Coming events were to uphold the Navy viewpoint; for while the Wonsan landing itself was delayed several days by enemy mines, it was 15 November before the first ships safely entered the harbor at Hungnam.⁷

Marine Loading and Embarkation

On 11 October, the day after he opened his CP on the *Mount McKinley*, General Smith learned that the Hungnam plan had been dropped. The

⁵ CinCFE *OpnPlan 9-50 (Alternate)*, 8 Oct 50.

⁶ C/S Notes in X Corps *WD 10-25 Oct 50*; ComPhibGruOne, "Report of . . . Operations . . . 25 Jun 50 to 1 Jan 51," 11; Smith, *Chronicle*, 57-59; and Capt Walter Karig, et al, *Battle Report: The War In Korea* (New York, 1952), 301-302. According to Gen Wright, MacArthur's G-3, "Admiral Joy may have 'discussed' this often with the Commander-in-Chief, but no one ever 'argued' with him." Wright ltr 16 Feb 56.

⁷ ComNavFE msg to CinCFE, 0010 12 Nov 50.

1st Marine Division continued loading out in accordance with X Corps OpnO 4, even though its objective had already been captured.⁸

During the period 4–10 October, Admiral Doyle had assembled at Inchon an assortment of Navy amphibious vessels, ships of the Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS), and Japanese-manned LSTs (SCAJAP).⁹ With the arrival of Transport Squadron One on 8 October, the total shipping assigned to the landing force consisted of one AGC, eight APAs, two APs, 10 AKAs, five LSDs, 36 LSTs, three LSUs, one LSM, and six commercial cargo vessels ("Victory" and C-2 types).¹⁰

Loading a reinforced division, several thousand Corps troops and thousands of tons of supplies and equipment proved to be an aggravating job under the circumstances. Pressure on the attack and landing forces for an early D-Day only magnified the shortcomings of Inchon as a port. Limited facilities and unusual tide conditions held dock activity to a series of feverish bursts. Moreover, many ships not part of the amphibious force had to be accommodated since they were delivering vital materiel. The assigned shipping itself was inadequate, according to the Division G-4 and "considerable quantities" of vehicles had to be left behind. Much of the trucking that could be taken was temporarily diverted to help transport the 7th Infantry Division to Pusan; and although unavailable for port operations when needed, it returned at the last minute to disrupt out-loading of the Shore Party's heavy beach equipment.¹¹ Out of conditions and developments such as these grew the necessity for postponing D-Day from 15 October, the date initially set by General Almond, to the 20th.

For purposes of expediting embarkation and economizing on shipping space, X Corps directed the 1st Marine Division to out-load with less than the usual amount of supplies carried by a landing force.¹² Resupply shipping would be so scheduled as to deliver adequate stocks of Class I, II, III, and IV consumables ". . . prior to the time they

⁸ Smith, *Chronicle*, 59.

⁹ ComPhibGruOne "Operations Report," 10. SCAJAP is the abbreviation for Shipping Control Authority, Japan. Under this designation were American ships lent to Japan after World War II, of which many were recalled during the Korean War to serve as cargo vessels.

¹⁰ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex D (hereafter G-4 SAR), 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹² These totals were authorized: C-Rations for five days; individual assault rations for one day; POL for five days; Class II and IV supplies for 15 days; and five units of fire (U/F). *Ibid.*; 1stMarDiv *Administrative Order (AdmO)* 13-50, 8 Oct 50. A unit of fire is a convenient yardstick in describing large quantities of ammunition. It is based on a specific number of rounds per weapon.

would be needed," even though when "they would be needed" was anybody's guess at this stage of the war.¹³

In anticipation of a rapid advance to the west (which did not materialize), Division G-4 not only assigned 16 pre-loaded trucks and trailers to each RCT, but also earmarked three truck companies and 16 more trailers as a mobile logistical reserve. These supply trains would stay on the heels of the attacking regiments in order to maintain ammunition dumps as far forward as possible in a fast-moving situation.¹⁴

On 8 October, ComNavFE directed Admiral Doyle and General Smith to effect his OpnPlan 113-50.¹⁵ Coincidentally, the first contingents of the 5th Marines boarded the *Bayfield* (1/5), *George Clymer* (2/5), and *Bexar* (3/5). Three days later, on the 11th, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray, commander of the reserve regiment, opened his CP in the *Bayfield*, and his unit completed embarkation.¹⁶

Although reserve and administrative elements of the 1st and 7th Marines loaded earlier, the four assault battalions of these regiments could not begin embarkation until 13 October, owing to the fact that the LSTs had been used for shuttle service around Inchon Harbor. General Smith opened his CP in the *Mount McKinley* at 1200 on the 11th.¹⁷ The last of the landing ships were loaded by high tide on the morning of the 15th, and later that day all of them sailed for the objective. By evening of the 16th, most of the transports were on the way, but the *Mount McKinley* and *Bayfield* did not depart until the next day.¹⁸

Broken down into seven embarkation groups, the landing force and X Corps troops leaving Inchon comprised a grand total of 1902 officers and 28,287 men. Of this number, 1461 officers and 23,938 men were on the rolls of the 1st Marine Division, the breakdown being as follows:

Marine officers	1119
Marine enlisted	20,597
Navy officers	153
Navy enlisted	1002

¹³ G-4 SAR, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵ ComNavFE msg to ComPhibGruOne, CG 1stMarDiv and others, 0200 8 Oct 50.

¹⁶ 5thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1035 11 Oct 50; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex QQ, appendix A (hereafter 1/5 SAR), 4, appendix B (hereafter 2/5 SAR), 6, and appendix C (hereafter 3/5 SAR), 4.

¹⁷ CG 1stMarDiv msg to All Units, 0752 11 Oct 50; Smith, *Notes*, 373.

¹⁸ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex RR (hereafter 7thMar SAR), 9; Smith, *Notes*, 399, 409; 1stMar HD Oct 50, 3.

U. S. Army & KMC officers attached	189
U. S. Army & KMC enlisted attached	2339 ¹⁹

Even in the last stages of loading and during the actual departure, new orders had continued to flow out of higher headquarters. It will be recalled that General Smith issued his OpnO 16-50 for the Wonsan assault on 10 October. An alternate plan, to be executed on signal, went out to subordinate units the same day, providing for an administrative landing by the Division on RED Beach, north of Wonsan, instead of Kalma Peninsula.²⁰

As a result of discussions during a X Corps staff conference on 13 October, a party headed by General Almond flew to Wonsan the next day.²¹ The purpose of his visit was to reconnoiter the objective and to explain his latest operational directive to the I ROK Corps commander, who would come under his control.²² This new order, published on the 14th, called for an administrative landing by X Corps and a rapid advance westward along the Wonsan—Pyongyang axis to a juncture with EUSAK. Assigned to the 1st Marine Division was an objective northeast of Pyongyang, the Red capital.²³

It was this tactical scheme, then, that prevailed as the Marines departed Inchon from 15 to 17 October and the 7th Infantry Division prepared to embark from Pusan. General Smith, of course, placed into effect his alternate order for a landing on RED Beach.²⁴ While there may be a note of humor in the fact that on 15 October ComPhibGruOne issued his OpnO 16-50 for the "assault landing" at Wonsan, it must be remembered that the ship-to-shore movement would remain essentially the same from the Navy's standpoint, regardless of the swift march of events ashore.

¹⁹ 1stMarDiv *Embarkation Summary*, 16 Oct 50; and "Special Report 1stMarDiv," 12.

²⁰ 1stMarDiv *OpnO 17-50*, 10 Oct 50.

²¹ ". . . Division [1stMarDiv] Advance Parties were flown to Wonsan in accordance with a definite plan which materialized just before we set sail from Inchon. As a matter of fact the personnel for these parties and even some of the jeeps were already loaded out and had to be removed from the shipping prior to our sailing." Col A. L. Bowser, *Comments*, n. d.

²² CG's *Diary Extracts in X Corps W/D*, 10-25 Oct 50; Smith, *Chronicle*, 59.

²³ X Corps *Operation Instruction (OI) 11*, 14 Oct 50; Smith, *Notes*, 385.

²⁴ According to General Smith, "The reason for issuing 1stMarDiv OpnO 17-50 was to provide for an administrative landing in sheltered waters just north of Wonsan where there would be easy access to the existing road net. The ship-to-shore movement provided for in 1stMarDiv OpnO 16-50 was retained intact. This plan [OpnO 17-50] had to be dropped when it was found that Wonsan Harbor was completely blocked by mines, and that it would be much quicker to clear the approaches to the Kalma Peninsula where we eventually landed . . . 1stMarDiv dispatch [1450 24 Oct] cancelled both 1stMarDiv OpnOs 16 and 17 and provided for an administrative landing on the Kalma Peninsula as directed by CTF 90." Gen O. P. Smith ltr to authors, 3 Feb 56. Hereafter, unless otherwise stated, letters may be assumed to be to the authors.

Two Weeks of Mine Sweeping

Mine sweeping for the Wonsan landing commenced on 8 October, when Task Group 95.6, commanded by Captain Spofford, began assembling for the mission of clearing a path ahead of the 250-ship armada bringing the 1st Marine Division and other units of X Corps. It had been known for a month that the waters of the east coast were dangerous for navigation. The first mine was discovered off Chinnampo on the west coast on 7 September, and four days later Admiral Joy ordered the United Nations Blocking and Escort Force to stay on the safe side of the 100-fathom line along the east coast. But it was not until 26 and 28 September that more definite information was acquired the hard way when the U. S. destroyer *Brush* and the ROK mine sweeper YMS 905 were damaged by east coast mines.²⁵

On the 28th ComNavFE issued his OpnO 17-50 covering operations of mine sweepers in Korean waters. The herculean task awaiting the 12 available American vessels of this type may be judged by the fact that more than a hundred had been employed off Okinawa in World War II.

Although the exact date remained unknown, it was a safe assumption that North Korean mining activities, beginning in late July or early August, were speeded by the Inchon landing, which aroused the enemy to the peril of further amphibious operations. Russian instructors had trained Korean Reds at Wonsan and Chinnampo in the employment of Soviet-manufactured mines. Sampans, junks, and wooden coastal barges were used to sow a field of about 2000 in the harbor and approaches to Wonsan.²⁶

Captain Spofford's TG 95.6 commenced its sweep off Wonsan on 10 October after a sortie from Sasebo. Unfortunately, the three large fleet sweepers, *Pledge*, *Pirate*, and *Incredible*, were not well adapted to the shallow sweeping necessary at Wonsan. More dependence could be placed in the seven small wooden-hulled U. S. motor mine sweepers *Redhead*, *Mocking Bird*, *Osprey*, *Chatterer*, *Merganser*, *Kite*, and *Partridge*, which were rugged even though low-powered. Spofford's two big high-speed sweepers, *Doyle* and *Endicott*, had their limitations for

²⁵ CinCPacFlt *Interim Evaluation Report No. 1*, VI, 1090.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, 1088-1089; Smith, *Notes*, 404; Karig, *Korea*, 301. See also ADVATIS Rpt 1225 in EUSAK WD, 24 Oct 50.

this type of operation; and the nine Japanese and three ROK sweepers lacked some of the essential gear.²⁷

The U. S. destroyers *Collett*, *Swenson*, *Maddox*, and *Thomas* were in the Wonsan area as well as the cruiser *Rochester*. On the 9th the *Rochester's* helicopter sighted 61 mines in a reconnaissance, and the next day the observer found them too numerous to count. In spite of these grim indications, rapid progress the first day led to predictions of a brief operation. By late afternoon a 3000-yard channel had been cleared from the 100-fathom curve to the 30-fathom line. But hopes were dashed at this point by the discovery of five additional lines of mines.²⁸

On 12 and 13 October the naval guns of TG 95.2 bombarded Tanchon and Songjin on the northeast coast. While the USS *Missouri* treated the marshaling yards of Tanchon to 163 16" rounds, the cruisers *Helena*, *Worcester*, and *Ceylon* fired at bridges, shore batteries, and tunnels in the Chongjin area.²⁹

Spofford tried to save time on the morning of the 12th by countermining as 39 planes from the carriers *Leyte Gulf* and *Philippine Sea* dropped 50 tons of bombs. It was found, however, that even the explosion of a 1000-pound bomb would not set off nearby mines by concussion.³⁰ According to Admiral Struble, "The results of this operation simply bore out our experience in World War II, but were tried out on the long chance that they might be effective in the current situation."³¹

The 12th was a black day for the sweeping squadron. For the steel sweepers *Pledge* and *Pirate* both were blown up by mines that afternoon and sank with a total of 13 killed and 87 wounded. Rescue of the survivors was handicapped by fire from enemy shore batteries.³²

While the blast of a half-ton bomb had not been powerful enough, Spofford reasoned that depth charges might start a chain reaction in

²⁷ CinCPacFlt *Interim Evaluation Report No. 1*, VI, 1004; Dept Army, Joint Daily Situation Report (D/A Daily SitRpt) 105; Karig, *Korea*, 311-314.

²⁸ Minesweep Rpt #1 in X Corps *WD* 10-25 Oct 50; ComNavFE Intelligence Summary (IntSum) 76; ComNavFE Operations Summary (OpSum) 201; D/A Daily SitRpt 105; Karig, *Korea*, 315.

²⁹ ComUNBlockandCortFor, "Evaluation Information," in CinCPacFlt, *Interim Evaluation Report No. 1*, 13-15; ComSeventhFlt, "Chronological Narrative," in *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁰ CTG 95.6 msg to CTF95, CTF77 11 Oct 50 in G-3 Journal, X Corps *WD* 10-25 Oct 50; ComNavFE OpSum 215; ComNavFE IntSum 82; Karig, *Korea*, 315.

³¹ VAdm A. D. Struble Comments, 14 Mar 56.

³² ComPatRon 47, "Special Historical Report," in CinCPacFlt *Interim Evaluation Report No. 1*, H4; ComUNBlockandCortFor, "Evaluation Information," 5, 15; Karig, *Korea*, 318-322.

which mines would detonate mines. But a precision drop by naval planes met with no success, and there was nothing left but a return to the slow, weary, and dangerous work of methodical sweeping.³³

The flying boats, Mariners and Sunderlands, were called upon to assist by conducting systematic aerial searches for moored and drifting mines, which they destroyed by .50 caliber machine-gun fire. Soon an effective new technique was developed as the seaplanes carried overlays of Hydrographic Office charts to be marked with the locations of all mines sighted. These charts were dropped to the sweepers and were of considerable assistance in pinpointing literally hundreds of mines.³⁴

On the 18th one of the Japanese sweepers, the *JMS-14*, hit a mine and went down. In spite of this loss, the end seemed in sight. No attempt was being made to clear all the mines; but with a lane swept into the harbor, it remained only to check the immediate area of the landing beaches. So hopeful did the outlook appear that it was more disillusioning when the ROK *YMS 516* disintegrated on 19 October after a terrific explosion in the supposedly cleared lane. Thus was TG 95.6 rudely introduced to the fact that the sweepers had to deal with magnetic mines in addition to the other types. The mechanism could be set to allow as many as 12 ships to pass over the mine before it exploded. This meant, of course, that the sweepers must make at least 13 passes over any given area before it could be considered safe.³⁵

The *Mount McKinley* having arrived off Wonsan that same day, Admiral Doyle and General Almond, with six members of the X Corps staff, went by boat to the battleship *Missouri* for a conference with Admiral Struble. CJTF-7 asserted that he would not authorize the administrative landing until the magnetic mines were cleared from the shipping lane—a task which he estimated would take three more days. This announcement led to General Almond's decision to fly ashore in the *Missouri's* helicopter on the 20th and establish his CP in Wonsan.³⁶ So rapidly had the situation changed, it was hard to remember that this date had once been set as D-Day when the Marine landing force would fight for a beachhead.

³³ ComNavFE OpSum 219; ComNavFE IntSum 82.

³⁴ ComFltAirWing 6, "Evaluation information," in CinCPacFlt *Interim Evaluation Report No. 1*, D8.

³⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 404-407; Karig, *Korea*, 324-326.

³⁶ CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *WD*, 10-25 Oct 50; Smith, *Notes*, 404-405; ComPhibGruOne "Operations Report," 11-12; LtCol H. W. Edwards, "A Naval Lesson of the Korean Conflict," *U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, lxxx, no. 12 (Dec 54), 1337-1340; Karig, *Korea*, 324-326; 1stMarDiv G-1 Journal 20 Oct 50.

Operation Yo-Yo

Shortly after 1700 on the afternoon of 19 October, a rumor swept through the 250 ships of the Tractor and Transport Groups. "War's over!" shouted the excited Marines. "They're taking us back to Pusan for embarkation to the States."

Rumor seemed to have the support of fact on this occasion, for compass readings left no doubt that the armada had indeed executed a maritime "about face" to head southward. What the men on the transports did not know was that the reversal of direction had been ordered for purely military reasons as a result of the conference that day on the *Missouri*.

It was puzzling enough to the troops the following morning when the ships resumed their original course. But this was nothing as compared to their bewilderment late that afternoon as the Tractor and Transport Groups turned southward again.

Every twelve hours, in accordance with the directive of CJTF-7, the fleet was to reverse course, steaming back and forth off the eastern coast of Korea until the last of the magnetic mines could be cleared from the lane in preparation for an administrative landing at Wonsan.³⁷

Marines have always been ready with a derisive phrase, and "Operation Yo-Yo" was coined to express their disgust with this interlude of concentrated monotony. Never did time die a harder death, and never did the grumblers have so much to grouse about. Letters to wives and sweethearts took on more bulk daily, and paper-backed murder mysteries were worn to tatters by bored readers.

On the 22d, at CJTF-7's regular daily meeting, Admirals Struble and Doyle conferred in the destroyer *Rowan* with Admiral Smith and Captain Spofford. It was agreed that the sweeping could not be completed until the 24th or 25th, which meant that Operation Yo-Yo might last a week.³⁸

The situation had its serious aspects on LSTs and transports which were not prepared for a voyage around Korea taking nearly as long as a crossing of the Pacific. Food supplies ran low as gastro-enteritis and dysentery swept through the crowded transports in spite of strict medical precautions. The MSTs transport *Marine Phoenix* alone had a sick list

³⁷ ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report," 12; Smith, *Notes*, 404; Struble Comments, 16 Mar 56.

³⁸ ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report," 12; Struble Comments, 16 Mar 56.

of 750 during the epidemic. A case of smallpox was discovered on the *Bayfield*, and all crewmen as well as passengers were vaccinated that same day.³⁹

On the 23d, as the *Mount McKinley* proceeded into the inner harbor at Wonsan, there could be no doubt that the final mine sweeping would be completed by the 25th. Operation Yo-Yo came to an end, therefore, when Admiral Doyle directed the amphibious fleet to arrive on the 25th, prepared for an administrative landing. The order of entry called for the Transport Group to take the lead, followed by the vessels of the Tractor Group.⁴⁰

On the morning of the 25th, Admirals Struble and Doyle held a final conference with General Almond and Captain Spofford. By this time they had decided to land the Marines over YELLOW and BLUE Beaches on Kalma Peninsula, as originally conceived in 1stMarDiv OpnO 16-50. The inner harbor of Wonsan would remain closed until completely clear of mines, and then it would be developed as a supply base.⁴¹

Marine Air First at Objective

The sense of frustration which oppressed the Marine ground forces during Operation Yo-Yo would have been increased if they had realized that the air maintenance crews had beaten them to Wonsan by a margin of twelve days. Even more humiliating to the landing force troops, Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell were flown to the objective area. On the evening of the 24th they put on a USO show spiced with quips at the expense of the disgruntled Leathernecks in the transports.

Planning for Marine air operations in northeast Korea had been modified from day to day to keep pace with the rapidly changing strategic situation. On 11 October, when ROK forces secured Wonsan, preparations for air support of an assault landing were abandoned. Two days later Major General Field Harris, CG 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Tactical Air Command X Corps (TAC X Corps), flew to

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex VV, (hereafter 7thMTBn SAR), 2; ComPhibGruOne msg to BuMed, 0034 27 Oct 50.

⁴⁰ CTF 90 msg to CTG 90.2, 1119 24 Oct 50 in G-3 Journal, X Corps W/D 10-25 Oct 50.

⁴¹ ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report," 12-13; Smith, *Notes*, 407; CG 1stMarDiv msg to subordinate units, 1450 24 Oct 50; Smith ltr, 3 Feb 56.

Wonsan. After inspecting the airfield he decided to begin operations without delay.⁴²

These developments, of course, were accompanied by amendments to the original plan which had assigned Marine Fighter Squadrons (VMFs)-214 and -323 the air support role in the naval task force, with Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-12 to be landed as soon as the field at Wonsan was secured.

In response to changing conditions, VMF-312 aircraft flew from Kimpo to Wonsan on the 14th, and R5Ds lifted 210 personnel of the advance echelons of Headquarters Squadron (Hedron)-12, Service Squadron (SMS)-12, and Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron (VMF(N))-513. Two LSTs sailed from Kobe with equipment of MAG-12, and Combat Cargo Command aircraft of Far East Air Force began flying in aviation gasoline. Bombs and rockets were flown to Wonsan by the planes of VMF(N)-513.⁴³

On the 16th, VMFs-214 and -323 departed Sasebo for station off Wonsan in the CVE's *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait*. From the following day until the 27th these two fighter squadrons were to provide air cover for the mine sweeping operations off Wonsan and the ensuing 1st Marine Division administrative landing.⁴⁴

TAC X Corps OpnO 2-50, issued on 15 October, had contemplated the opening of the port at Wonsan and arrival of the surface echelon within three days. Until then the two squadrons at Wonsan airfield were to be dependent on airlift for all supplies.

The unforeseen ten-day delay in clearing a lane through the mine field made it difficult to maintain flight operations. Fuel was pumped by hand from 55-gallon drums which had been rolled along the ground about a mile from the dump to the flight line. Muscle also had to substitute for machinery in ordnance sections which had only one jeep and eight bomb trailers for moving ammunition.⁴⁵

Despite such difficulties, air operations from the new field were speeded up when General Almond landed to establish the X Corps CP

⁴² Unless otherwise stated this section is based on: 1stMAW *HD*, Oct 50; 1stMAW *SAR*, annex K (hereafter MAG-12 *SAR*), 1, appendix G (hereafter VMF-312 *SAR*), 3, 5-6; and Smith, *Notes*, 433-441.

⁴³ E. H. Giusti and K. W. Condit, "Marine Air at the Chosin Reservoir," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvii, no. 7 (Jul 52), 19-20; 1stMAW *SAR*, annex K, appendix H (hereafter VMF(N)-513 *SAR*), sec 6, 2.

⁴⁴ 1stMAW *SAR*, annex J, appendix Q (hereafter VMF-214 *SAR*), 2.

⁴⁵ Giusti and Condit, "Marine Air at the Chosin Reservoir," 20; 1stMAW *HD*, Oct 50; TAC X Corps *OpnO* 2-50, 15 Oct 50, in *Ibid*.

at Wonsan on the 20th, after taking control of I ROK Corps. Armed reconnaissance sorties were flown regularly and attacks made on retreating bodies of NKPA troops. On the 24th a VMF-312 flight surprised a column of about 800 Korean Reds near Kojo, 39 miles southeast of Wonsan, and scattered it with heavy losses.

There were administrative as well as operational problems to be solved. If an assault landing had been carried out at Wonsan, the provision for air support would have been planned in a manner similar to that of Inchon. But the change to an administrative landing caused the 1st MAW to be placed under the control of the Far East Air Forces. This was in accordance with a CincFE directive to the effect that when both FEAF and Naval air were assigned missions in Korea, coordination control would be exercised by CG FEAF. He had in turn delegated that control north of the 38th parallel, including close-support operations of carrier-borne planes, to CG Fifth Air Force.

An effort was made at first by MAG-12 officers to comply with Fifth AF procedures, which required the schedule for any given day's strikes to be submitted to that headquarters by 1800 the previous day. Obviously, the distance separating X Corps in Wonsan from Fifth Air Force Headquarters in Seoul made it virtually impossible to get clearance in time. This issue was speedily settled by a conference in which Major General Earle E. Partridge, USAF, CG Fifth Air Force, gave General Harris oral permission to plan and execute supporting missions for X Corps in northeast Korea while awaiting clearance from the Fifth AF.

His decision was made on the basis of a liberal interpretation of the authority of CG 1st MAW to take action "in emergencies." In practice, the arrangement worked out smoothly during this preliminary period, and on 12 November CG Fifth Air Force confirmed his oral agreement with a written directive.

Direction of air operations in support of X Corps was exercised by MAG-12 for the 1st MAW from 15 October to 9 November. Night operations did not begin until late in October for lack of runway lights at Wonsan, so that VMF(N)-513 flew daytime missions along with VMF-312. The two carrier-based squadrons conducted flights in a similar manner. Aircraft reported at designated times to specified Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPs) for operations directed by a daily Fifth AF order, some of them in response to previously submitted requests of ground units for air support.

Major Vincent J. Gottschalk's Marine Observation Squadron (VMO)-6 was under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division, though it was under the administrative direction of MAG-12. Two helicopter pilots, Captain Wallace D. Blatt and First Lieutenant Chester C. Ward, flew from Kimpo to Wonsan on 23 October. The rest of the squadron had proceeded by LST. A flight echelon of helicopters, commanded by Captain Victor A. Armstrong, VMO-6 executive officer, remained temporarily at Kimpo at the request of the Fifth Air Force to evacuate casualties of the 187th Airborne RCT in the Sukchon area.⁴⁶

MacArthur Orders Advance to Border

From all that has gone before, it might be expected that UN strategy and tactics, after frequent modification, had finally been decided upon by mid-October 1950. This was not the case, and a brief recapitulation of events in western and central Korea is now necessary in order to set the scene for the sweeping changes that followed.

General Walker's Eighth Army, as mentioned earlier, had deployed along the 38th Parallel after relieving X Corps above Seoul on 7 October. Two days later, armored elements of the 1st Cavalry Division crossed the boundary to spearhead the U. S. I Corps drive on Sariwon and Pyongyang. The former city was secured on 17 October with the help of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, while the 24th Infantry Division moved up the west coast on the left of the Kaesong-Sariwon-Pyongyang axis.⁴⁷ The 1st Cavalry Division continued the attack toward Pyongyang on the 18th, entering the Red capital with the 1st ROK Division the next day. Pyongyang was secured on 21 October, and elements of the 1st Cavalry Division also occupied the undefended port city of Chinnampo, 35 miles to the southwest.⁴⁸

A vertical envelopment on 20 October had come as a dramatic supplement to the attack on Pyongyang. The 187th Airborne RCT parachuted successfully into the Sukchon-Sunchon area, about 30 miles north of the city, thereby cutting the two principal NKPA escape routes to Manchuria. After watching the drop from his plane, General MacArthur stopped off at Pyongyang and declared that the surprise stroke

⁴⁶ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex WW (hereafter VMO-6 SAR), 2.

⁴⁷ EUSAK WD Sum, Oct 50, 13-23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 25-30.

had closed the trap on the enemy. At his Tokyo headquarters the next day, he predicted that the war would end shortly.⁴⁹

In mountainous central Korea on the right flank of I US Corps, the 6th ROK Division had been leading the rapid advance of South Korean forces under EUSAK. With Hwachon captured on 8 October, the division went on to take the vital hubs of Chorwon on the 10th and Kumwha on the 11th. It made contact with ROK Capitol Division elements from Wonsan the following day. During the next 24 hours, the 6th Division advanced 20 miles, and the 7th and 8th ROK Divisions fanned out to exploit the deepening penetration. On 14 October the 6th closed on Yangdok, about midway between Wonsan and Pyongyang.⁵⁰

Thereafter the ROK forces in the center of the peninsula began veering northwest, so that by 22 October, the day after Pyongyang fell to I Corps, the vanguard 6th Division was bearing down on Kunu-ri,⁵¹ about 45 air miles to the north of the capital.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that a trans-peninsular drive by X Corps was no longer necessary after mid-October. In fact, both in Washington and in Tokyo the attitude prevailed that the Korean war was nearing an end. President Truman had deemed a meeting of minds appropriate at this time, and he flew to Wake Island for a conference with General MacArthur on 15 October.⁵²

Various aspects of American policy in the Far East were discussed at the meeting, but the Korean situation ranked high on the agenda. When asked by President Truman about the chances of Russian or Chinese interference in the war, General MacArthur replied, "Very little." His conclusion agreed with that held by many in high government circles, although officials in both Washington and Tokyo realized that the possibility of Communist intervention could not be dismissed entirely.

⁴⁹ Schnabel, *The Korean Conflict*.

⁵⁰ EUSAK W/D Sum, Oct 50, 11-20.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 20-32.

⁵² The following summary of the Wake Island meeting is primarily based on: Gen O. N. Bradley, Comp., *Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference on October 15, 1950* (Washington, 1951); and Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 364-367. These accounts are strongly objected to in MacArthur ltr, 24 Feb 56. For a differing account of the meeting see: C. A. Willoughby and J. Chamberlain, *MacArthur 1941-1951* (New York, 1954), 382-383; Whitney, *MacArthur*, 384-395, 416; and Gen D. MacArthur, "Gen. MacArthur Makes His Reply," *Life*, xl, no. 7 (13 Feb 56), 107-108. Participants in the conference besides Truman and MacArthur were: Secretary of the Army Frank Pace; Ambassador Philip Jessup; Ambassador to Korea John Muccio; General Bradley; Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk; Admiral Arthur W. Radford, CinCPacFlt; Averell Harriman; and BrigGen Courtney Whitney of FECOM Headquarters.

MacArthur stated that about 300,000 Chinese troops were stationed in Manchuria, of whom from 100,000 to 125,000 had been deployed along the Yalu River boundary with Korea. He estimated that only 50,000 to 60,000 of these troops could get across the river. If they attempted to move on Pyongyang, he said, they would be "slaughtered," owing to the proximity of UN air bases.

The commander in chief added that Russia had no troops immediately available for a thrust into the peninsula. It would take six weeks for a Soviet division to assemble at the border, and by that time winter would have set in. And while Russia had a fairly good air force in Siberia and Manchuria, tactical support of Chinese ground troops would be difficult to control. "I believe Russian air would bomb the Chinese as often as they would bomb us," MacArthur remarked.⁵³

Part of the conference dealt with the rehabilitation of Korea and the eventual departure of UN troops after the fighting had ceased. MacArthur expressed his belief that organized resistance would end by Thanksgiving (23 November). He hoped to withdraw EUSAK to Japan by Christmas, leaving X Corps, reconstituted with the 2d and 3d U. S. Infantry Divisions and other UN detachments, as a security force until peace and order were fully restored. All present seemed to agree that elections should be held early to achieve stability in the re-united country, and that the ROK Army must be made tough enough to deter the Chinese Communists from any aggressive moves.

The conference ended on a note of general optimism. President Truman pinned a Distinguished Service Medal on the commander in chief (his fifth), and the latter boarded his plane and departed shortly after the meeting.

Once back in Tokyo, MacArthur issued on 17 October a new order that would become effective if Pyongyang fell before X Corps landed at Wonsan (as was the case four days later). This draft established parallel zones of action for EUSAK and X Corps in North Korea, with the Taebaek Range as the dividing line. The restraining line for UN Forces was advanced as much as 60 miles to a lateral drawn through Chongsanjangsi-Koingdong-Pyongwon-Toksil-li-Pungsan-Songjin (see Map 1). ROK Forces, of course, would still drive all the way to the borders of Manchuria and the USSR.⁵⁴

⁵³ By way of comparison, MacArthur paid tribute to the Marine Corps' highly technical system of tactical air employment: "Ground support is a very difficult thing to do. Our marines do it perfectly. They have been trained for it. Our own Air and Ground Forces are not as good as the marines but they are effective."

⁵⁴ CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *W'D*, 10-25 Oct 50; Schnabel, *Korean Conflict*.

On 24 October, just as the 1st Marine Division was preparing to land at Wonsan, General MacArthur did away with the restraining line altogether. The original restriction on the advance of UN elements, he told his subordinate commanders, was based on the possibility of enemy capitulation. Since there appeared to be no prospect of a formal surrender, he now authorized Generals Walker and Almond to use whatever of their ground forces were necessary to secure all of North Korea. And he enjoined them ". . . to drive forward with all speed and with full utilization of all their force."⁵⁵

The commander in chief received a message from JCS the next day, telling him that they considered his new order "not in consonance" with their 27 September authorization, which had stipulated a policy of using only ROK ground forces in the provinces bordering Russia and Manchuria. The matter had caused some concern in Washington, the Joint Chiefs said, and they wanted to know MacArthur's reasons for making the decision.⁵⁶

In reply they were informed that the commander in chief's decision was a "matter of military necessity," since the ROK Army lacked both the strength and the seasoned commanders required for securing North Korea. MacArthur added that the 27 September authorization had ". . . merely enunciated the [restraining line] provision as a matter of policy," and had admitted the possibility of JCS instructions being modified in accordance with developments. He stated further that he possessed the authority to so modify from Secretary of Defense Marshall himself, who had told him ". . . to feel unhampered tactically and strategically . . ." Assuring the Joint Chiefs that he understood the reasons for their apprehension, he warned that ". . . tactical hazards might even result from other action than that which I have directed."⁵⁷

And there the matter rested.

Landing of 1st Marine Division

It was at a X Corps staff meeting on 18 October that General Almond disclosed MacArthur's plan for parallel zones of action and the new Chongsanjansi-Songjin restraining line in North Korea. Upon establishing his CP at Wonsan two days later, he accordingly assumed command

⁵⁵ CinCUNC msg CX 67291, 24 Oct 50; X Corps *WD Sum*, Nov 50, 5.

⁵⁶ JCS msg 94933, 24 Oct 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 372.

⁵⁷ CinCFE msg 67397, 25 Oct 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 372.

of all UN and ROK forces north of the 39° 10' parallel and east of the Taebaek Range.⁶⁸

By this time the ROK Capitol Division was occupying Hamhung, Hungnam, and nearby Yonpo Airfield, all of which had been captured on 17 October during the swift drive northward.⁶⁹ The ROK 3d Division had one regiment at Wonsan, another at Kojo, and the third en route to Hamhung.⁶⁰

On the 21st, General Almond requested CJTF-7 to land one battalion of Marines at Kojo immediately, for the purpose of relieving the ROK regiment defending that locale. He contended that Navy LSTs could beach there safely, since SCA JAP ships had already done so. Learning of the proposed landing, Admiral Doyle argued against it and Admiral Struble forbade it on the ground that the military requirement did not justify the risk incident to negotiating unswept waters. Thus the landing was called off, although the Marines had not heard the last of Kojo.⁶¹

On 22 October, General Smith issued a new plan based on the proposed X Corps deployment as far north as the Chongsanjangsi-Songjin line. The 1st Marine Division would now occupy the southern part of the extended corps zone, with each regiment responsible for the security of its assigned sector.⁶² But again planning went for naught when, two days later, General Almond received MacArthur's order to disregard the restraining line and use whatever forces necessary to drive rapidly to the Manchurian and Soviet borders. On 25 October, therefore, X Corps directed the 1st Marine Division to concentrate one RCT in the Hamhung area and to relieve elements of the I ROK Corps at the Chosin and Fusen Reservoirs. South Korean troops had already begun their advance on these vital power centers, some 50 to 60 air miles north of Hamhung.⁶³

⁶⁸ CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *W/D*, 10-25 Oct 50.

⁶⁹ EUSAK *W/D*, 23 Oct 50.

⁶⁰ X Corps *W/D*, 10-25 Oct 50.

⁶¹ "Summary of Activities, 21 Oct," in *Ibid.*; ComPhibGruOne "Operations Report," 13; Smith, *Notes*, 404-407; Struble Comments, 14 Mar 56.

⁶² 1stMarDiv *OpenPlan 4-50*, 22 Oct 50. "G-3 (Col Bowser) and G-4 (Col McAlister) landed by boat at Wonsan through a very narrow swept channel on the 23rd or 24th of October. Advance Parties of the Division were contacted at this time and a reconnaissance of the entire Wonsan area was made to select and mark administrative assembly areas for units of the Division. Included in this reconnaissance was the St. Benedict Abbey, which was selected as the assembly area for the 7th Marines in view of its projected employment to the north shortly after landing." Bowser Comments.

⁶³ X Corps *W/D*, 10-25 Oct 50; X Corps G-3 Journal, in *ibid.*; Smith, *Notes*, 285.

It was also on the 25th that the 1st Marine Division finally began its administrative landing at Wonsan—as anticlimactic a landing as Marines have ever made. Five LSTs loaded with Engineer, Shore Party, and Combat Service Group elements beached on Kalma Peninsula in the evening. Since the approaches had not been declared clear until late afternoon, the main ship-to-shore movement was delayed until the next day. Thus, 26 October actually became D-Day—or “Doyle Day,” as it was referred to by an impatient General Almond.⁶⁴

At first light on the 26th, landing craft clustered around the transport vessels in the swept channel as troops spilled down debarkation nets. The first of 39 scheduled waves were shortly on the way, with amphibious craft of every description churning the water.⁶⁵ LSUs began disgorging armor of the 1st Tank Battalion at 0730, and the big machines, fitted with deep-water fording adapters, thrashed through the surf and onto the loose sand.⁶⁶ Simultaneously, swarms of vehicles of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion crawled ashore shuttling troops and cargo.⁶⁷

At 0900, LSTs landed the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines on YELLOW Beach, while Colonel Lewis B. Puller's regimental headquarters splashed ashore out of landing craft dispatched from the *Noble*. The reserve battalion, 2/1, remained on board ship until the 28th. By 1700, the 3d Battalion was in position for the night and the 1st was well on the way to Kojo for a special mission. In the midst of the landing, Colonel Puller received a message from General Smith congratulating him on his being selected for promotion to brigadier general.⁶⁸

Troops of the 7th Marines marched ashore on BLUE Beach without incident, and the assembled battalions moved to assigned areas north of Wonsan. At 1300, Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg opened his regi-

⁶⁴ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex PP (hereafter 1stMar SAR), 4; and Smith, *Notes*, 407–409. The orders covering the actual debarkation of troops were contained in CTF 90 msgs to CTG 90.2, 0240 and 0910 23 Oct 50; CTG 90.2 msg to CTE 90.22, 1328 25 Oct 50; and CG 1stMarDiv msg to subordinate units, 1450 24 Oct 50. The order to land was given in CTF 90 msg to CTG 90.2, 0707 25 Oct 50.

⁶⁵ “At the time of the administrative landing we thought that we might as well use the planned ship-to-shore movement for scheduled waves in order to avoid making a new ship-to-shore plan. In this way we were able to execute by referring to our original plan [OpnO 16–50] for the assault landing without issuing an entire new order.” Bowser Comments.

⁶⁶ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex OO (hereafter 1stTkBn SAR), 2–8.

⁶⁷ 1stAmphTracBn HD Oct 50, 2–3.

⁶⁸ 1stMar SAR, 4; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMar, 1355 26 Oct 50.

mental CP at St. Benedict's Abbey, which had been gutted by the retreating Communists.⁶⁹

Advance parties of the 5th Marines began landing over both beaches at 0800. Priority was given to unloading the reserve unit's cargo, and the majority of troops remained on board transports for the night. Most of the regiment debarked the next day and assembled about three miles northwest of Wonsan, where Lieutenant Colonel Murray established his CP at 1800.⁷⁰

Only the 2d Battalion and several reconnaissance parties of the 11th Marines landed on the 26th. The remainder of the artillery regiment went ashore the next day and bivouacked at the coastal town of Munpyong-ni, five miles above Wonsan. Colonel James H. Brower, the regimental commander, detached 2/11 to the 1st Marines at 1715 on 27 October, but the other battalions ". . . remained in a mobile state awaiting further orders."⁷¹

The Wonsan landing, though tactically insignificant at the moment, was a major logistical undertaking to such units as the 1st Engineer Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel John H. Partridge), the 1st Shore Party Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Henry P. Crowe), and the 1st Combat Service Group (Colonel John H. Cook, Jr.).

Representatives from these and other support and service units had flown to the objective area several days before the Division's arrival. After completing an inspection of Wonsan, the Shore Party detachment employed 500 North Korean POWs and 210 civilians to improve landing sites and beach exits. This work continued 24 hours a day for nine days, until the vanguard LSTs grated ashore on Kalma Peninsula in the evening of 25 October.⁷² At this point, Shore Party Group C (Major George A. Smith) assumed responsibility for YELLOW Beach in the north, and Group B (Major Henry Brzezinski) took over BLUE Beach.

With the arrival of the first waves of LSTs, LSUs, LVTs, and landing craft in the morning, there began a routine of unremitting toil that would abate only after all of X Corps had landed weeks later. Because

⁶⁹ 7thMar SAR, 12; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1628 26 Oct 50. For a detailed account of the tragedy of St. Benedict's, see Capt Clifford M. Drury (ChC), USNR, *The History of the Chaplains Corps, U. S. Navy*, (MS) V.

⁷⁰ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex QQ, (hereafter 5thMar SAR), 8.

⁷¹ 11thMar *UnitReport (URpt)*, 21-28 Oct 50.

⁷² The concluding narrative of this chapter is derived from 1stMarDiv SAR, annexes MM (hereafter 1stSPBn SAR), 5-8, and UU (hereafter 1st CSG SAR) 6 and 1stSPBn, *HD for Advance Party*, 1-2.

of the shallow offshore gradient, many amphibious craft could not reach the beach with their heavy cargoes, and the Shore Party troops had to construct ramps which projected 30 feet into the water. These improvised piers were made of rice bags filled with sand, with the result that their maintenance required considerable effort in men and heavy equipment. A pontoon causeway constructed on 27 October lessened the difficulties connected with getting troops ashore, but other problems persisted.

One of these had to do with a sandbar that stretched across the boat lanes about 50 yards from the coast. Heavier craft frequently grounded here, and while some could be towed ashore by tractor dozers (TD-18s) and LVTs, others had to be unloaded in the water by cranes operating off the ramps and from barges.

Once men and supplies finally reached dry land, there was the difficulty of transporting them inland over the loose sand and around the sprawling dunes of the peninsular beaches. Trucks and trailers often bogged down to such depths that they had to be uprooted and towed by LVTs or dozers. This tied up the overworked tracked vehicles when they were badly needed elsewhere.

The Combat Service Group established its Class I, III, and V dumps according to plan on 26 October, but Class II and IV supplies arrived on the beach ". . . in a completely mixed condition," owing to the haste of the out-loading at Inchon. From D-Day onward, from 1500 to 2000 Korean civilians were hired daily to help segregate and issue supplies.

Upon the completion of mine sweeping in the inner harbor, the intact port facilities of Wonsan became operative on 2 November. During the next nine days, the Combat Service Group dispatched by rail to Hamhung 3900 tons of ammunition alone. On 9 November, the group was attached to X Corps for operational control, thereafter assuming specific responsibility for such varied tasks as: operation of all port facilities; unloading all X Corps elements; transporting all equipment and supplies to inland dumps and supply points; casualty evacuation; maintenance of an airhead at Wonsan Airfield; providing local security; traffic control in the port and its environs; and providing field maintenance for all units in the Wonsan area.

The magnitude of the logistical operation can be imagined from a survey of statistics mentioned in Shore Party reports. By 31 October, when the 1st Marine Division's landing was completed, a total of 24

cargo vessels, 36 LSTs, and one LSM had been unloaded. Bulk cargo in the order of 18,402 tons had moved across the beaches along with 30,189 personnel and 4731 vehicles. During the same period, 2534 troops were out-loaded with 70 vehicles and 4323 POWs. And in November, as the MAG-12 elements and the rest of X Corps poured ashore, the total of ships handled soared to 76 cargo and 52 LSTs, adding 30,928 personnel, 51,270 tons of supplies, and 7113 vehicles to the short-lived buildup in Northeast Korea.

CHAPTER III

First Blood At Kojo

1/1 Sent to Kojo—Marine Positions in Kojo Area—The All-Night Fight of Baker Company—2/1 Ordered to Kojo—Security Provided for Wonsan Area—Marines Relieved at Kojo

IT WAS PERHAPS inevitable after the NKPA collapse that an end-of-the-war atmosphere should prevail. This attitude was found in the CP as well as the foxhole. General MacArthur, while witnessing the Eighth Army paratroop landings north of the captured enemy capital, was quoted by the newspapers as saying:

The war is very definitely coming to an end shortly. With the closing of that trap there should be an end to organized resistance.¹

As another straw in the wind, General Smith had received a dispatch from ComNavFE on 21 October which stated that on the conclusion of hostilities it was his intention to recommend to CINCPAC that the 1st Marine Division be returned to the United States, less an RCT to be stationed in Japan.²

On the 24th the Marine commander learned that X Corps had received a document, for planning purposes only, providing that the Corps commander would become commander of the occupation forces. These were to consist of a single American division, probably the 3d Infantry Division, while the remainder of the Eighth Army returned to Japan.³

Such indications seemed less reassuring after an incident which occurred at Wonsan on the evening of D-day. Two Marines, gathering firewood on the beach, had been blown to pieces by a booby trap. They

¹ *Newsweek*, xxxiv, no. 18 (30 Oct 50), 30.

² Smith, *Notes*, 403; Col A. L. Bowser, Comments, n. d. See also FMFPac Staff Study:

"The Establishment of a Balanced Fleet Marine Force Air-Ground Force in the Western Pacific," 19 Oct 50.

³ Smith, *Notes*, 403.

were the only casualties from enemy action in the Wonsan landing.⁴

As early as 24 October the Marine division CP aboard the *Mount McKinley* had been advised of an ancillary mission. Immediately following the landing one battalion was to be sent 39 miles south of Wonsan to the small seaport of Kojo. There it was to protect a supply dump of the ROK I Corps.⁵

X Corps issued OI 13 on the 25th but General Smith did not receive his copy until two days later. Corps orders now assigned the Marine division a zone of action more than 300 road miles from north to south and 50 road miles in width. The missions prescribed for the Marines were those of an occupation rather than a fighting force:

- (1) To land on beaches in the vicinity of Wonsan.
- (2) To relieve all elements of I ROK Corps in Kojo and zone.
- (3) To protect the Wonsan-Kojo-Majon-ni area, employing not less than one RCT, and patrolling all roads to the west in zone.
- (4) To advance rapidly in zone to the Korean northern border.
- (5) To be prepared to land one Battalion Landing Team (BLT) in the Chongjin area rapidly on order.
- (6) To assist the 101st Engineer Group (C) (ROK) in the repair of the Yonghung-Hamhung railroad, employing not less than one engineer company.⁶

The 1st Marine Division in turn assigned these tasks to the following units in OpnO 18-50, issued at 0800 on the 28th but communicated orally to most of the designated commanding officers during the preceding 48 hours:

- (1) RCT-1 to relieve elements of I ROK Corps in Wonsan-Kojo-Majon-ni zone, establish necessary road blocks to prevent movement into the area, patrol roads, and destroy enemy in zone. RCT-1 to maintain one reinforced battalion at Kojo until further orders.
- (2) RCT-7 to relieve elements of I ROK Corps along the Hamhung-Chosin Reservoir road, advance rapidly to the northern tip of the reservoir and Changjin, prepared for further advance to the northern border of Korea, and to destroy enemy in zone.
- (3) RCT-5 to move to an assigned zone behind RCT-7, relieve elements of I ROK Corps in the vicinity of Fusen Reservoir, establish necessary road blocks to prevent movement into the area, patrol the roads and destroy the enemy.

⁴ CG 1stMarDiv msg to subordinate units, 2001 27 Oct 50. Firewood being scarce in Korea, it was sometimes booby trapped.

⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 385; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex C (hereafter G-3 SAR), 5. The assignment went to 1/1. See Col J. Hawkins ltr to CMC, n. d., and LtCol R. E. Lorigan ltr to CMC, 8 Feb 56 for a discussion of the lack of planning and intelligence resulting from this order being received while underway.

⁶ Smith, *Notes*, 393-394; G-3 SAR, 5-6.

- (4) BLT1/5 to be activated on order. Upon activation to report to the designated commander for operational control and landing in the vicinity of Chongjin.
- (5) The 11th Marines, reinforced and less detachments, from an assembly area in the vicinity of Hamhung, to be prepared for operating in the zone of any RCT.⁷

Two of the objectives mentioned in these orders, Chongjin and the northern border of Korea, were more than 300 road miles north of Wonsan. With the exception of the main coastal route, most of the roads in the 1st Marine Division zone were mere mountain trails, unfit for tanks or heavy vehicles.

OpnO 18-50 was modified the next day to provide for attaching the 1st Battalion, KMC Regiment, to the 5th Marines, and the 5th KMC Battalion to the 1st Marines. The security of the Munchon and Yonghung areas (13 and 32 miles north of Wonsan respectively) was assigned for the time being to the 5th Marines, reinforced by Company A of the 1st Tank Battalion.

On the 27th General Smith moved from the *Mount McKinley* at 1000 to the new Division CP, a mile north of Wonsan. An old Russian barracks, it was too small and badly in need of repairs. The building occupied by the 1st Marine Air Wing was in even worse shape, but carpenters were soon busy at boarding up windows and doors blown out by bombs.⁸

1/1 Sent to Kojo

A holiday spirit prevailed among the men of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, as they entrained on the morning of 26 October 1950 at a railhead near the Wonsan airfield. Physical activity was a treat after the monotony and confinement of Operation Yo-Yo, and 1/1 had been selected for the Kojo mission. Immediately after the landing on YELLOW Beach at 0900 that morning, preparations were made for departure by rail of the rifle companies at noon. Supplies and reinforcing units were scheduled to follow on the 27th on a second train and a convoy consisting of 1/1 and Motor Transport Battalion vehicles; Battery F, 2d

⁷ 1stMarDiv OpnO 18-50, 28 Oct 50; CG 1stMarDiv msg to COs, 1stMar, 5thMar, 7thMar, 2146 28 Oct 50.

⁸ Smith, *Chronicle*, 66; MajGen E. W. Snedeker Comments, 22 Mar 56; LtGen E. A. Craig, "Notes concerning Wonsan Administrative Landing and events immediately following, October 26, 1950 to November 5, 1950," 4 Sep 56.

Battalion, 11th Marines; 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion; and a detachment of Company D, 1st Medical Battalion.⁹

At 1330 a wheezing Korean engine manned by a Korean crew pulled out of Wonsan with the rifle companies riding in gondola cars. It was a bright blue day, with a hint of frost in the air; and not a sign of enemy resistance appeared along the 39-mile route, though several tunnels might have been utilized for a guerrilla attack.

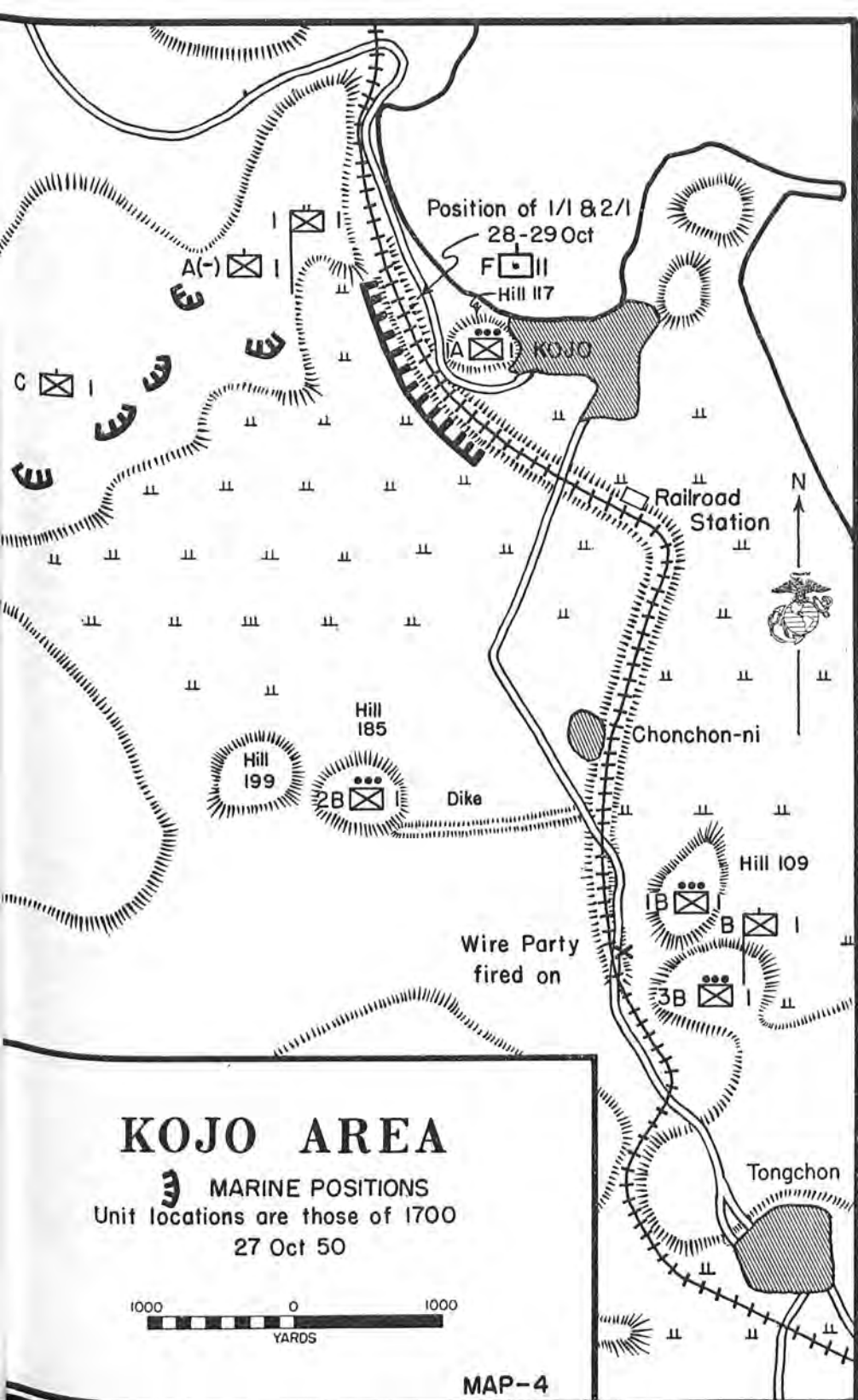
Upon their arrival late that afternoon, Kojo proved to be the most attractive town the men had seen in Korea—an almost undamaged small seaport flanked by the white beaches and sparkling blue waters of the bay.

There remained for the Marines the task of relieving ROK units and protecting an area consisting of a coastal plain about 5000 yards in diameter which stretched from the bay to a semicircle of hills ranging from 150 to 600 feet in height (see Map 4). The ROK officers assured the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jack Hawkins, that his men would find their duty at Kojo a tame assignment. They admitted that small bands of escaping NKPA soldiers had sometimes raided the villages for rice, but added that ROK patrols had scoured the hills without meeting any organized resistance.

The night passed uneventfully for the battalion in a perimeter northwest of Kojo while the ROKs occupied outposts along the southern fringe of the coast plain. In the morning the Marines found the rice paddies glazed with the first ice of the autumn. After completing the relief of the 2d Battalion of the 22d ROK Regiment at 1200, they watched with amusement that afternoon as the Koreans crowded into the gondola cars with their women, children, dogs, and chickens for the ride back to Wonsan. When it seemed that the train could not hold another human being, a ROK officer barked out an order and everyone squeezed farther back with audible sighs and grunts. At last, as a grand climax, the officer shouted a final command and the entire trainload of Koreans sat down simultaneously, like collapsing dominoes.

It was an ironical circumstance that the ROKs on the overcrowded train took with them the remnants of the supply dump that 1/1 was assigned to guard. However important this dump may have been in its heyday, it had apparently been consumed by the ROKs to the point

⁹ This section is derived from: 1/1 msg to 1stMarDiv, 1750 27 Oct 50; 1stMar SAR, 4; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 7; 1stMar HD, Oct 50, 4; X Corps Periodic Operations Report (POR) 30; LtCol D. W. Bridges interv, 4 Nov 55; Capt G. S. Belli Comments, n. d.



Position of I/1 & 2/I
28-29 Oct

F II
Hill 117

A III
KOJO

Railroad Station



Chonchon-ni

Hill 185

Hill 199

2B III

Dike

Hill 109

IB III

B I

Wire Party
fired on

3B III

Tongchon

KOJO AREA

MARINE POSITIONS
Unit locations are those of 1700
27 Oct 50



where only a few drums of fuel oil remained along with other odds and ends.

That afternoon the train and truck convoys arrived without incident, bringing supplies and all reinforcing units except the artillery. And though the Marines at Kojo did not neglect security precautions, they had seen nothing during their first 24 hours to hint that an organized enemy was about to launch a surprise attack.

Marine Positions in Kojo Area

Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins faced a problem in selecting positions for his battalion.

Mindful of my mission—to protect the supply dump until removed—I had to dispose the battalion in a way designated to accomplish this end [he commented]. The supply dump was located at the railroad station in the flat ground south of Kojo—a point difficult to defend, since it was on low ground and could be approached by the enemy from any direction. I considered the most likely direction of enemy approach to be from the south along the coastal road or through the valley leading toward Kojo from the southwest. Therefore, I decided to place Company B in outpost positions to cover these approaches. . . . The remainder of the battalion would be deployed on the hill massif west of Kojo, prepared to defend the area or counterattack if necessary to prevent loss of the supplies at the railroad station. I did not consider this disposition ideal by any means from the standpoint of defensive strength, but it appeared to be the best possible disposition in the complex terrain to protect the supply dump. . . . Also, I did not have reason to expect an organized attack by large enemy forces. In the event such a contingency should occur, it was planned that Company B, the outpost, would withdraw to the main battle position.¹⁰

Captain Wesley B. Noren's Baker Company positions were about two miles south and southwest of Kojo across an expanse of rice paddies. From east to west the company held three isolated points of high ground:

1st Platoon (First Lieutenant George S. Belli), reinforced by one section of light machine guns and one 3.2" rocket launcher squad, on the east slope of Hill 109;

3d Platoon (Master Sergeant Matthew D. Monk) and Company Headquarters, reinforced by one section of heavy machine guns, one section of light machine guns, a 75mm recoilless rifle, one squad of

¹⁰ Hawkins ltr, n. d. It should be remembered that Hawkins made his dispositions before learning that the ROKs had taken the supply dump with them.

3.5" rocket launchers and a flame thrower, on high ground to the west and south of the 1st Platoon;

2d Platoon (First Lieutenant George G. Chambers), reinforced by one section of 81mm mortars, one section of light machine guns, a 75mm recoilless rifle and one squad of 3.2" rocket launchers, on Hill 185.

The remainder of 1/1 occupied positions west of Kojo. Captain Robert P. Wray's Charlie Company held a continuous line of foxholes in the hills that rose from the rice paddies a mile and a half north of Baker Company's positions. From west to east were First Lieutenant Francis B. Conlon's 2d Platoon, First Lieutenant William A. Craven's 1st and Second Lieutenant Henry A. Commiskey's 3d. About 250 yards to the east were two platoons of Captain Robert H. Barrow's Able Company. On the slopes north of Barrow stood Colonel Hawkins' CP and the tubes of First Lieutenant Edward E. Kaufer's 4.2" Mortar Platoon. Captain Barrow's third platoon occupied the topographical crest of Hill 117.¹¹

While the Marines organized their positions during the afternoon of 27 October, a column of refugees "almost as long as the eye could see" appeared in the valley southwest of Kojo headed for the seaport. Colonel Hawkins estimated that there were 2000 to 3000 people in the column. Since he did not have the time to examine all the refugees before darkness, Hawkins had them herded into the peninsula north-east of Kojo for the night.¹²

After a quiet afternoon on the 27th, the first hint of enemy opposition came at 1600 when a wire team was fired upon in the vicinity of Hill 185. Two hours later a truck and a jeep borrowed from the S-3, Major David W. Bridges, received fire from the high ground west of Hill 109. Both were abandoned after the truck broke down, and a Baker Company patrol had a brief fire fight at 1900 when it recovered the vehicles.¹³

These first indications of Red Korean activity in the Kojo area were attributed to the forays of guerrilla bands. Not until after the battle did the Marines learn from POW interrogations that the enemy consisted of an estimated 1000 to 1200 men of the 10th Regiment, 5th NKPA

¹¹ Maj W. C. Noren, Report of 27-28 Oct 50, revised and annotated in ltr to authors, 22 Nov 55; (hereafter Noren rpt); Bridges interv, 4 Nov 55; Barrow interv, 27 Oct 55; Maj R. P. Wray ltr to CMC, 24 Jan 56.

¹² Hawkins ltr, n. d.

¹³ 1stMar HD, Oct 50, encl 2, 1; Noren rpt; Bridges interv 4 Nov 55.

Division. This regiment, commanded by Colonel Cho Il Kwon, former director of the Communist Party at Wonsan, was believed to have its CP in the large village of Tongchon, about two miles south of the Baker Company outposts. Other units of the NKPA division, which was credited with a total strength of 7000 to 8000 men, occupied areas farther to the south.¹⁴

After the Red Korean collapse, the 2d, 5th, and 10th NKPA Divisions had maintained their organization, though much depleted in strength by casualties. Withdrawing to the Wonsan area, they kept to the secondary roads and raided the villages for food. It is a tribute to Communist discipline that the outfits had not lost their cohesion at a time when their cause seemed to be collapsing. But the 5th NKPA Division was one of the units made up almost entirely of Koreans who had served in the Chinese Civil War, and its officers were fanatically dedicated to Communist principles.¹⁵

Only well trained and led troops could have launched the attacks which hit both ends of the Baker Company's chain of outposts simultaneously about 2200, after the first few hours of darkness had passed in comparative quiet punctuated by occasional shots. Normal security measures were taken on a cold night with a 50 per cent watch—one rifleman remaining on the alert in the two-man foxholes while the other burrowed for warmth into a partially closed sleeping bag. The 81mm and 60mm mortars were registered on the hills just beyond the 2d and 3d platoons.¹⁶

These two units came under attack shortly before First Lieutenant Carlton's position at the extreme west of Charlie Company's line was assailed. In each instance the enemy infiltrated within grenade throwing distance before his presence was detected. Past contacts with American soldiers had given the Red Koreans some knowledge of the language, and for purposes of deception the NKPA assault troops shouted phrases in broken English:

"Come this way! . . . Don't shoot! We're friends."¹⁷

¹⁴ 1/1 telephone call (tel) to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1415 28 Oct 50; G-2 X Corps RP in G-3 Journal, X Corps *WD*, 29 Oct 50; X Corps *Periodic Intelligence Report (PIR)* 33.

¹⁵ 1stMarDiv *SAR*, 26; X Corps *PIR* 41, annex 3; 1stMarDiv *PIR* 20, encl 2.

¹⁶ 1stMar *SAR*, 4; Noren rpt; Bridges interv, 4 Nov 55.

¹⁷ 1stMar tel to G-2 1stMarDiv, 2130 31 Oct 50; Wray ltr, 24 Jan 56.

The All-Night Fight of Baker Company

The surprise was devastating, particularly in the Baker Company zone. On the eastern slope of Hill 109 the 1st Platoon had no inkling until men yelled warnings from the foxholes just as the enemy grenades exploded and Red Koreans in estimated strength of two platoons overran the position. Seven Marines were killed before they could get out of their sleeping bags, and others lost contact in the darkness.

The 3d Platoon and Company CP were attacked from three points to the south and southeast. Marine 60mm mortars fired within 50 yards of the front line while the 81s laid down a barrage directly forward of the position. After a brief and bitter struggle, Communists believed to number three platoons were repulsed.

In the Charlie Company zone, Lieutenant Carlon's position was hardest hit. The North Koreans closed within ten feet before they were noticed. During the confused fighting which followed, the enemy won a brief foothold. An estimated 20 Marines were cut off but got back safely the next morning.

After recovering from the initial surprise the Charlie Company outposts repulsed all further attacks. Wray's men lost 6 killed and 16 wounded during the night's encounters but could count 92 Korean bodies the next morning.

At 2215 the 3d Platoon of Baker Company had a second attack at the same points as the first one. The Red Koreans appeared to Captain Noren to be exceptionally well disciplined and controlled in spite of heavy casualties inflicted on them by combination of mortar, machine-gun and small-arms fire, and grenades.¹⁸

The plight of Belli's platoon was first made known when 2/B on Hill 185 received a message to the effect that 1/B had withdrawn from Hill 109 with 30 men missing. The retirement was made possible by the brave stand of Sergeant Clayton Roberts, who covered the movement with a light machine gun until he was surrounded and killed.

The 3d Platoon beat off another attack meanwhile as the enemy closed in from the left rear as well as the front. With machine-gun fire coming from both directions, Noren informed the battalion CP at 2350 that his position was untenable and asked permission to with-

¹⁸ This section, except when otherwise noted, is based upon the 1stMar SAR 4-5, appendix II, 2; Noren rpt; Bridges interv 4 Nov 55; Barrow interv 27 Oct 55; 1stMar, HD Oct 50, encl. 2; 1; Wray ltr, 24 Jan 56; Hawkins ltr, n. d.; Statement of Lt James M. McGhee, 15 Feb 51.

draw. His request being granted, he directed Lieutenant Chambers to pull back from Hill 185, covering the withdrawal of 3/B with 81mm fire.

The intersection of the dike and railway track was designated as the meeting place for the three Baker Company platoons. Noren covered the rear of the 3/B withdrawal while his executive officer, First Lieutenant Chester B. Farmer, took charge of the point. Opposite Hill 109 they encountered Staff Sergeant Robert Fisher and five men whom Belli had directed to remain at the dike and pick up stragglers while the rest of 1/B continued to pull back.

Fisher reported that the attack on Hill 109 had been conducted with skill and discipline. Whistles and red and green flares were used for signaling by Communists who cut off a listening post and overran a squad on the right flank. The assault force numbered 160, according to POW testimony.

The methodical, position-by-position withdrawal of the three Baker Company platoons was conducted so skilfully that remarkably few casualties resulted. Noren lost all contact for a short time when enemy fire severed the antenna on his last operative SCR-300. At about 0215 Chambers' platoon was last to reach the meeting place, having beaten off several attacks during its withdrawal from Hill 185. With another large-scale enemy assault threatening, Noren organized a 360° defense on both sides of the railway track just south of the village of Chonchon-ni. One Marine was killed and six wounded by enemy fire received from the west as well as east.

Fox Battery of the 11th Marines had arrived in the Kojo area about midnight and set up its guns on the beach northeast of the town at about 0200.¹⁹ Baker Company had no radio in operation, however, until parts of two damaged SCR-300's were combined into one to restore communication. Contact was made with the 4.2" mortars, which registered about 0300, directed by Captain Noren, and broke up the NKPA attack. The 81mm mortars made it hot for the enemy in Chonchon-ni, and at 0330 the Communists apparently disengaged to withdraw east of the railway track and northward toward Kojo. Marine artillery had registered by 0400, but all was quiet in the area the rest of the night.

Although a few NKPA mortar shells were received, enemy equipment appeared to be limited for the most part to automatic weapons, small

¹⁹ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex SS, appendix 2 (hereafter 2/11 SAR), 14.

arms, and grenades. There were indications that Korean civilians had been used in several instances as human shields for an attacking force.²⁰

The NKPA withdrawal to Kojo led to the Marine speculation that the Communists meant to make enforced recruits of some of the hapless residents allotted a refuge in the peninsula north of the town. As it proved, they were not harmed by the NKPA troops. The last enemy effort, just before dawn, was an attack in platoon strength on Second Lieutenant John J. Swords' Able Company platoon by Reds who had infiltrated through Kojo. A brief fight ensued on Hill 117 as the Marines beat off the assault at the cost of one man killed and two wounded.

Baker Company elements had meanwhile resumed their withdrawal along the railway track north of Chonchon. All was quiet at first light when Noren began the task of evacuating his wounded in ponchos through rice paddies which were knee-deep in mud and water under a thin skin of ice. Marines came out from the Able Company positions to lend a hand.

The evacuation had nearly been completed when about 200 enemy troops suddenly moved out from Kojo in a westerly direction across the rice paddies. Whether they meant to interfere with the evacuation or merely to escape was never made clear. For the Marines of Able and Baker Companies as well as the gunners of Fox Battery opened up in broad daylight and found lucrative targets. An estimated 75 Communists were killed and wounded before the rest scurried out of range into the hills west of the coastal plain.

Some contact was maintained with the enemy until 1000 by elements of Charlie Company, then the action was gradually broken off as the planes of VMF(N)-513 came in low with close support.²¹ Although the strikes by air were largely uncontrolled because of poor radio communications between the Forward Air Controller (FAC) and the planes, they were very helpful to the Marines on the ground.²²

2/1 Ordered to Kojo

The radio message bringing the first news of the Kojo fight was sent by 1/1 at 0418 on the 28th. Owing to transmission difficulty, it was

²⁰ Capt R. M. Taylor tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1545 28 Oct 50.

²¹ VMF(N)-513 SAR, sec 6, 6; VMF(N)-513 *WD Oct 50*; 1/1 msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0050 29 Oct 50; Maj W. B. Noren Comments n. d.

²² Capt R. B. Robinson interv by Capt J. I. Kiernan, Jr., 6 Feb 51; Hawkins ltr, n. d.

picked up by the 7th Marines, relayed to the 1st Marines at 0700, and telephoned to the 1st Marine Division.²³ It stated briefly that the battalion had been under attack since 1700 by an estimated 1000 enemy and had suffered a large number of casualties. Helicopters were requested for air evacuation and an LSTH for water evacuation of the wounded. Air support was required, the message continued, adding that the destroyer in direct support of the battalion had not yet arrived on station.

At 0830 an officer from 1/1 reported in to 1st Marines CP with a further account. He reported a platoon of B Company cut off and estimated 150 casualties.²⁴

A third report from 1/1 reached the CP of the 1st Marine Division as an intercepted radio message at 1238 on the 28th while General Almond was conferring with General Smith. Sent from Kojo at 1000, the message said:

Received determined attack from South North and West from sunset to sunrise by large enemy force. Estimated from 1000 to 1200. One company still heavily engaged. Civilian reports indicate possibility 3000 enemy this immediate area. Have suffered 9 KIA, 39 WIA, 34 MIA [Missing in Action] probably dead. Two positions overrun during night. If this position is to be held a regiment is required. Enemy now to South North and West of us but believe road to North is still open. Harbor is in our hands and ROK LST has been here. Shall we hold here or withdraw to North? ROK supply dump . . . removed. Request immediate instructions. Send all available helicopters for wounded. Suggest send instructions by both radio and helicopters.²⁵

The Corps and Division commanders agreed immediately that Kojo should be held, since a large-scale NKPA attack appeared to be in the making. Another factor in this decision was the ROK supply dump. Nobody at the Division CP seemed to know as yet that it had been removed, but General Smith directed his G-3 to issue the necessary orders to send Colonel Puller, CO of the 1st Marines, and a battalion of reinforcements to Kojo. Within five minutes Colonel Alpha L. Bowser, 1stMarDiv G-3, telephoned Corps to request that a train be assembled on the Wonsan siding immediately for a battalion lift.²⁶

²³ S-3 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 0700 28 Oct 50; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1825 29 Oct 50.

²⁴ 1stMar tel to G-2 1stMarDiv, 1840 28 Oct 50.

²⁵ 1/1 msg to 1stMar, 1000 28 Oct 55. As Col Hawkins points out, the request for instructions refers to his only orders being to defend the ROK supply dump which no longer existed. Hawkins ltr, n. d.

²⁶ CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *WD*, 28 Oct 50; Craig "Notes . . . Oct 26-Nov 5, 1950"; G-3 1stMarDiv tel to G-3 X Corps, 1215 28 Oct 50; 1stMar *HD*, Oct 50, 4; LtCol R. E. Lorigan ltr to CMC 7 Dec 55.

Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, ADC of the 1st Marine Division, was on his way to a conference at the 1st Marines CP when he met General Almond and Colonel Puller, and the three compared notes from their jeeps. Craig informed them that action toward the providing of transportation had already been initiated by Division. A request had later been made for a second destroyer to provide gunfire support (the first having already arrived) and an LSTH for casualty evacuation. Another LST had been requested for the purpose of sending tanks to Kojo, since the road and bridges would not bear the weight of armor.

The possibility of a major engagement taking place at Kojo seemed to be confirmed by two later reports 1/1 sent at 1415 and 1840. The first relayed prisoner of war statements to the effect that an estimated 7000 men of the NKPA 5th Division were located at Tongchon.²⁷ The second, a radio message, read:

Reinforcement train has not arrived as of 1800. NK prisoners revealed large enemy force plans attack over position tonight. Recommend LVTs with LSTs stand by at daylight in case of emergency evacuation necessary. In view of large numbers of troops facing us as previously reported and fact enemy on all sides except seaward, consider situation critical. Request higher authority visit.²⁸

By that time Colonel Puller and the troops were on the way. Making up a train and loading it with a reinforced battalion and extra supplies in three and a half hours had been something of an administrative feat, particularly when the battalion was just coming off landing craft. Yet Lieutenant Colonel Allan Sutter's 2/1 and the Regimental Command Group pulled out for Kojo at 1630 and a second train followed two hours later.²⁹

Upon arrival at 2230, CO 1stMar learned that there had been no major enemy contact since 1000. Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins had contracted his unit that afternoon to his main position along the high ground forming a semicircle around Hill 117. The 2d Battalion and supporting arms having tied in with the 1st for the night, Colonel Puller concluded that no further cause for alarm existed. And since the battery positions at Kojo were limited, he radioed General Smith that more artillery would not be needed.³⁰

Seventeen Marines previously listed as MIA by 1/1 had returned unhurt to their units on the 28th after being cut off during the confusion

²⁷ 1/1 tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1415 28 Oct 50; Hawkins ltr, n. d.

²⁸ 1/1 msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1840 28 Oct 50.

²⁹ Craig, "Notes . . . Oct 26-Nov 5, 1950"; Col A. Sutter Comments n. d.

³⁰ Barrow interv, 28 Oct 55.

of the night's fighting. Marine air had all but obliterated Tongchon that afternoon while the U. S. destroyers *Hank* and *English* were bombarding Kojo.

The request for water as well as air evacuation of serious casualties had resulted in immediate action. Within an hour after receiving the message, CTF-90 had the transport *Wantuck* on the way with a surgical team, and VMO-6 sent five helicopters which flew 17 wounded men to a hospital ship at Wonsan on the 29th.³¹

Ten tanks of Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, were loaded in LST 883 at Wonsan on the 28th, but the ship was delayed by running aground. Upon arrival at Kojo the next day, it again became necessary for the LST to be pulled off the bar by a tug. By this time the military situation was so well in hand that the tanks were taken back to Wonsan without being unloaded.³²

Security Provided for Wonsan Area

Responsibility for the security of the Wonsan area having been assigned to the 1st Marines, something of an administrative problem was created on the 28th by the order sending 2/1 to reinforce 1/1 at Kojo. For the 3d Battalion of the regiment had departed that same day to relieve a ROK unit at Majon-ni, 28 miles west of Wonsan. Since this left no troops to patrol roads in the Wonsan area and maintain blocking positions at Anbyon, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and 5th KMC Battalion were attached to the 1st Marines for those missions.

Also available to the 1st Marines for such security duties as guarding the Wonsan airfield and harbor area were the 1st Shore Party Battalion, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, and Company B of the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion.³³

By the morning of the 29th, moreover, it had already become apparent that one or both of the battalions in the Kojo area could soon be spared. When General Craig arrived by helicopter, he found the situation well in hand.³⁴

About 60 percent of the seaport had been destroyed by air strikes and

³¹ CTF-90 msg to USS *Wantuck*, 0839 28 Oct 50; VMO-6 SAR, 23.

³² 1stTkBn SAR, 9, 11; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMar, 1650 29 Oct 50.

³³ 1stSPBn SAR, 5-6; 1stMar SAR, 6; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex TT (hereafter 1stAmph TracBn SAR) 4-5, appendix 2, 3-4.

³⁴ Craig ltr, 4 Sep 55; Smith, *Notes*, 450.

the guns of the destroyers when a patrol consisting of Dog and Fox Companies combed the ruins on the morning of the 29th without finding any evidences of enemy occupation. Meanwhile an Easy Company patrol ranged to the west of the coastal plain with equally negative results.³⁵

Captain George B. Farish of VMO-6 was making a reconnaissance flight when he discerned the word HELP spelled out in rice straw near a straw-stack a mile northeast of Tongchon. A Marine crawled out from concealment, and the pilot landed his helicopter to pick up PFC William H. Meister, who had been hiding since losing touch with his unit during the enemy night attack on Hill 109. This was the first of four such rescues completed by Farish that day.³⁶

On the afternoon of the 29th, Captain Noren led a patrol along the railway track south of Kojo and retraced the route of his fighting withdrawal in the darkness. In the vicinity of Hill 109, where Lieutenant Belli's platoon had been surprised, he found 12 Marine bodies. None had been despoiled by the enemy of arms or equipment.

Pushing farther south, Noren encountered sniper fire from the ruins of Tongchon, destroyed by Marine air, and called for more strikes. The Corsairs flushed out a group of 20 enemy troops, 16 of whom were cut down by the machine guns of the Baker Company patrol.³⁷

By the 29th, when General Almond made a trip of inspection to Kojo, it was possible to revise the original Marine casualty list as the MIA casualties were reduced. The final count was 23 KIA, 47 WIA and four MIA.³⁸

Twenty-four wounded Marines were evacuated to Wonsan that day by APD. LST 883, when it returned to Wonsan with the tanks, took the bodies of 19 Marines and 17 prisoners.

Enemy losses, in addition to 83 POW, were estimated at 250 KIA and an unknown number of WIA on the basis of more than 165 bodies found by Marine patrols. Curiously enough, the Communists had shown little interest in the equipment which fell into their hands, and two Marine 75mm recoilless rifles, rendered inoperative, were recovered with their carts and ammunition in the vicinity of Chonchon-ni. Almost all abandoned equipment was found in usable condition.³⁹

³⁵ 2/1 SAR, 3; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 8; CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1816 29 Oct 50; 1stMar Fwd ISUM, 1900 29 Oct 50.

³⁶ VMO-6 HD Oct 50; VMO-6 SAR, 3.

³⁷ Smith, Notes, 451; Noren Comments.

³⁸ Smith, Notes, 451; CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps W'D, 29 Oct 40.

³⁹ Smith, Notes, 451-452; 1stMar SAR, appendix 5, 2; Noren Comments.

Marines Relieved at Kojo

Each of the Marine rifle companies set up outposts in front of its zone. Morning and afternoon patrolling, with air on station, went on during the last two days of October with negative results. Harassing and interdiction fires were also continued until 1/1 departed.

LST 973 arrived off Kojo at 1430, 31 October, and disembarked the 5th Battalion of the KMC Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins' battalion, accompanied by Colonel Puller, left Kojo at 0700 the next morning on the return trip of the LST. The ship docked at Wonsan at 1230 on 2 November. That afternoon 1/1 relieved elements of the 1st Tank Battalion at the road block near Katsuma, four miles southeast of Wonsan.

Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., CG FMFPac, who was acting in an informal capacity as amphibious adviser to General MacArthur, inspected 2/1 at Kojo by helicopter on 31 October. Having arrived at Wonsan that day with Colonel Victor H. Krulak, his G-3, he conferred at X Corps Headquarters with Admiral Struble and Generals Almond and Smith.⁴⁰

Among the other subjects of discussion was the news that Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) prisoners had been taken in the area north of Hamhung by ROK units which were soon to be relieved by the 7th Marines. Several clashes with organized Chinese forces during the last days of October had also been reported by elements of the 1st Cavalry Division of the Eighth Army in western Korea.

The 7th Marines had been given the mission of spearheading the Marine advance to the northern border of Korea as directed in Corps orders. After parkas and other cold weather clothing had been issued from the beach dumps at Wonsan, the regiment completed the movement to Hamhung by motor convoy from 29 to 31 October. By this time the Corps drive to the Yalu was shifting into second gear, with the I ROK Corps far in advance along the coastal highway. Two U. S. Army units were soon to be involved. The 7th Infantry Division, which landed at Iwon from 29 October to 8 November, had Corps orders to push on toward the border; and it was planned that the 3d

⁴⁰ G-3 1stMarDiv tel to ExecO 1stMar, 1450 30 Oct 50; CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMar Div, 1521 31 Oct 50; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMarFwd, 2355 31 Oct 50; 1stMarAdv msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1900 1 Nov 50; Smith, *Notes*, 453-454; 1stMar SAR, 6-7; Hawkins ltr, n. d.; Sutter Comments.

Infantry Division, due to land its first units on the 8th at Wonsan, would relieve 1st Marines units south of Hamhung.⁴¹

Corps orders of 2 November called for 2/1 to return to Wonsan immediately. The southern boundary of X Corps was to be moved 70 miles farther south, effective on the departure of the battalion from Kojo. In order to cover the new zone, the KMC regiment had already been detached from the 1st Marine Division and given responsibility for the Corps zone south of the 39th Parallel. The relief of the 2d Battalion of the 5th Marines was completed by KMC elements that same day at Anbyon, eight miles southeast of Wonsan, thus freeing that unit for a motor lift northward to rejoin its regiment.⁴²

Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's 2/1 and the artillery battery departed Kojo the following day. A small train and a truck convoy sent from Wonsan were used chiefly for the transport of supplies, and most of the troops traveled by shanks' mare. The column was on the way when the report came that the rail line had been blown up at Anbyon by guerrillas. The battalion halted there and set up a perimeter for the night which included both the train and truck convoys. At 0730 in the morning the convoys moved out again for Wonsan. Delayed slightly by another rail break, Sutter completed the movement at noon.⁴³

The track-blowing incident gave evidence that the Marines must deal with a third type of enemy. In addition to the NKPA remnants, and the forces of Red China, it now appeared that account must be taken of thousands of uprooted Koreans prowling in small bands for food and loot—the flotsam of a cruel civil war. Called guerrillas by courtesy, they were actually outlaws and banditti, loyal to no cause. And by virtue of their very furtiveness, they were capable of doing a great deal of mischief to organized forces.

⁴¹ 1stMarDiv *OpnO* 18-50, 28 Oct 50; ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report", 13-14; 1stMarDiv *SAR*, 12; X Corps *W/Ds*, 29 Oct-8 Nov 50.

⁴² 1stMarDiv *POR* 98; CG X Corps msg X11890; X Corps *OI* 14, 29 Oct 50; X Corps *OI* 16, 31 Oct 50; CG 1stMarDiv ltr to CO 1stMar, 31 Oct 50; CG 1stMarDiv msg to 1stMar, 1803 2 Nov 50.

⁴³ 1stMar *URpt* (S-3) 8; CO 1stMar msg to 2/1, 1825 2 Nov 50; S-3 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1800 3 Nov 50; 2/1 msg to 1stMar, 1820 3 Nov 50; 2/11 *SAR*, 14-15; Sutter Comments.

CHAPTER IV

Majon-ni and Ambush Alley

Marine Units Tied in for Defense—Political Aspects of Mission—Roads Patrolled by Rifle Companies—Air Drop of Supplies Requested—First Attack on Perimeter—KMC Battalion Sent to Majon-ni—Movement of 1st Marines to Chigyong

FROM A DISTANCE the Y-shaped mountain valley, encircled by peaks and crossed by two swift, clear streams, might have been taken for a scene in the Alps. This impression was borne out by the village of Majon-ni, which nestled close to the earth, as seen from afar, with the tranquil and untroubled air of a Swiss hamlet.

On closer inspection, however, such first impressions could only prove to be illusory. The most prominent building in the Korean village was a new schoolhouse with the onion-shaped dome of Russian architecture. An incongruous and pretentious structure for such a small peasant community, it had been erected not so much for the instruction of children as the indoctrination of adults in Communist principles.

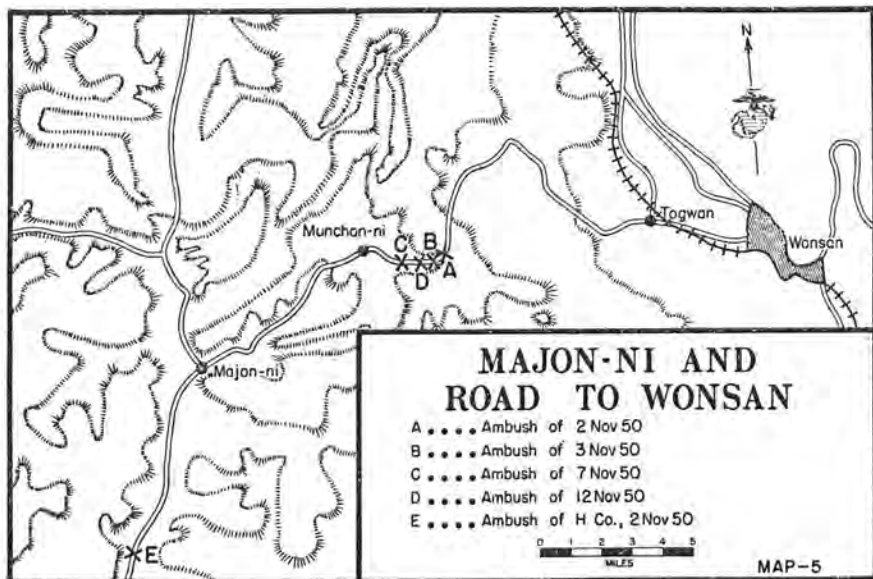
Majon-ni, in short, had been for five years a hotbed of forced culture in the doctrines of the Communist puppet state set up in northern Korea after World War II by the occupation forces of Soviet Russia. And it was here that the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines arrived on 28 October 1950. Relief of elements of the 26th ROK Regiment at 1600 enabled those troops to return to Wonsan in the vehicles which had brought 3/1.¹

The Marines had been assigned the mission of "setting up a defensive position at Majon-ni, destroying enemy forces, and denying them the use of this road net." In addition, the unit was "to patrol roads to the

¹ CO 3/1 msg to CO 1stMar, 1900 28 Oct 50; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 7, 2.

north, south, and west, and keep the road open between Majon-ni and Wonsan."²

This last directive was soon modified by oral instructions relieving the battalion from the responsibility of keeping open the Wonsan-Majon-ni road. The reason for the change was apparent when the troops of 3/1 covered the 28-mile route by motor lift in two echelons on the afternoon of the 28th. After leaving the seaport and alluvial plain, the shelf-like road twists precariously through a 3000-foot pass. This stretch abounds in hairpin turns and deep gorges which are ideal for setting a tactical trap, and the route was soon to be known to the troops as Ambush Alley. Although traversable by tanks, it offered too much danger from road-blocks and landslides to permit the dispatch of the iron elephants.³



The strategic importance of the Majon-ni area derived from its position at the headwaters of the river Imjin and the junction of roads lead-

² CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMar, 1730 27 Oct 50. See also CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMar, 1515 27 Oct 50; 1stMar *OpnO* 9-50, 27 Oct 50; 1stMarDiv *AdmO* 14-50, 27 Oct 50.

³ Col T. L. Ridge, *Notes on Operations in North Korea*, 9 Sep 55 (hereafter *Ridge, Notes*) and comments on preliminary draft, 28 Feb 56; Andrew Geer, *The New Breed* (New York, 1952), 203.

ing east to Wonsan, south to Seoul, and west to Pyongyang. They were being traveled extensively at this time by NKPA troops escaping northward in civilian clothes after the collapse of the Red Korean military effort.

It was natural that the 1st Marine Division, with a zone of more than 15,000 square miles to control, should be ordered to occupy such an important road junction and potential assembly area as Majon-ni.⁴ Thus the Marines of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge's reinforced battalion were sent as a blocking and screening force.

Marine Units Tied In for Defense

In addition to H&S, Weapons, and the three rifle companies, the task organization consisted on 28 October of Battery D of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, the 3d Platoon of Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion, and detachments from ANGLICO, 1st Signal Battalion; Company D, 1st Medical Battalion; and H&S Company, 1st Marines.⁵

The battalion commander and his S-3, Major Joseph D. Trompeter, decided after a survey of the terrain that the commanding ground was too far from the village and too rugged for company outposts. The logical solution seemed to be a battalion perimeter combined with daytime company OPs and vigorous patrolling of the three main roads. In order to tie in all units of a perimeter 3770 yards in circumference, it was necessary to create provisional platoons of such H&S, artillery and engineer troops as could be spared from their regular duties. Even so, the defense was spread thin in places.

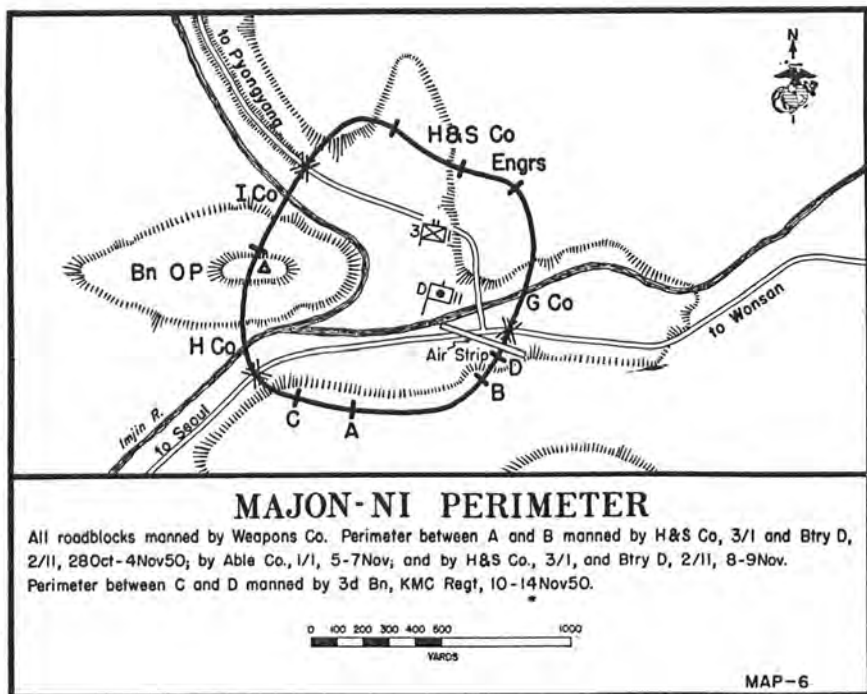
The schoolhouse was the obvious place for the battalion CP. Communication within the perimeter was by telephone, with wires laid from the CP to artillery and mortar positions as well as company and platoon CPs. Radio communication was established with the regiment and the division but due to the terrain remained irregular at best.

First Lieutenant Leroy M. Duffy and his engineers were assigned the task of constructing an OY strip on the east side of the perimeter which was completed on 2 November. A parallel cliff made it necessary to

⁴Smith, *Notes*, 393-394; G-3 SAR, 5-6.

⁵Except where otherwise indicated, this section is based on: Ridge, *Notes*; and Comments, 28 Feb 50; LtCol E. H. Simmons ltr, 14 Jan 56; 1stLt Charles R. Stiles, "The Dead End of Ambush Alley," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvi, no. 11 (Nov 51), 38-45.

land planes at a dangerous angle, but no better site could be had in this steep-sided valley.



Topography also limited Captain Andrew J. Strohmenger's cannoners, who were almost literally "firing out of a barrel." Close-in support was out of the question in the bowl-like valley ringed with peaks, but the six howitzers were emplaced so that they could be swung to fire on any avenue of approach, especially toward the three roads leading into Majon-ni.⁶

No difficulty was found in deciding on a water point, for tests established the purity of the water from both branches of the Imjin flowing through the perimeter. Lieutenant Duffy explained that he added chlorine only because the Marines were accustomed to the flavor.

⁶ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 14; Capt A. J. Strohmenger, ltr to Col T. L. Ridge, 16 Sep 55; 3/1 msg to 1stMar, n. t. 2 Nov 50.

Political Aspects of Mission

The Marine mission had its political as well as military side. Major Edwin H. Simmons, CO of Weapons Company, was given the responsibility for defending the three road blocks of the perimeter with Weapons Company personnel. At each of them he stationed a heavy machine gun section and a 3.5" rocket launcher section. These barriers were also ports of entry where all Korean transients were searched for weapons. When a group of 20 to 30 accumulated, they were escorted under guard to the prison stockade, just across the road from the battalion CP.⁷

There they were "processed" by the Civil Affairs Section, consisting of 12 Marine enlisted men under the command of First Lieutenant Donald M. Holmes and Master Sergeant Marian M. Stocks, known facetiously as the mayor and sheriff respectively of Majon-ni. Their decisions were based largely on the findings of the 181st Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) team and the battalion S-2, Second Lieutenant Frederick W. Hopkins. The CIC specialists proved to be indispensable by contributing daily intelligence based on civilian as well as POW interrogations.

As might be supposed, the question of whether a transient was an escaping NKPA soldier or a harmless peasant might have perplexed Solomon himself. But the Marines came up with a simple off-the-cuff solution. Time did not permit a lengthy screening, and each Korean was given a brief examination with the aid of interpreters. If his head was still close-cropped in the NKPA manner, if his neck showed a tanned V-line recently left by a uniform, if his feet bore the tell-tale callouses left by military footgear—if he could not pass these three tests, the transient was sent to the prison stockade as a fugitive Red Korean soldier. Now that Chinese Communist troops had been encountered both on the X Corps and Eighth Army fronts, it was all the more important that battlewise NKPA elements should be prevented from joining their new allies if Red China intervened.

Some of the prisoners were admittedly NKPA veterans, weary of the war and ready to give up voluntarily. Manifestations of this spirit caused Lieutenant Colonel Ridge to send a radio request for an air drop of surrender leaflets.

The first full day's operations, on 29 October, resulted in 24 prisoners

⁷ This section is based upon LtCol E. H. Simmons interv, 4 Nov 55 and ltr, 14 Jan 56.

being taken. But this was a trickle as compared to the torrent which would follow until an average daily rate of 82 was maintained during the 17 days of the operations.

Roads Patrolled by Rifle Companies

Each of the rifle companies was given the mission of sending out daily motorized or foot patrols while manning, as required, company OPs. The three roads were assigned as follows:

- George Company (Captain Carl L. Sitter), the road to Wonsan;
- How Company (Captain Clarence E. Corley, Jr.) the road to Seoul;
- Item Company (First Lieutenant Joseph R. Fisher), the road to Pyongyang.⁸

All patrols reported negative results throughout the first four days. Nevertheless, a system of artillery and 81mm mortar harassing and interdiction fires on suspected Red Korean assembly areas was put into effect. Major Simmons was designated the Supporting Arms Coordinator (SAC), and OYs were used for artillery spotting and to call air strikes when planes were on station.⁹

The battalion commander emphasized to his officers the necessity for maintaining as good relations with the inhabitants as security would permit. Strict troop discipline was to be maintained at all times, and the villagers were allowed their own mayor and council along with such laws or customs as did not conflict with the Marine mission.¹⁰ A policy of justice and fairness had its reward when the inhabitants warned the CIC team of an impending attack by organized NKPA troops.

POW interrogations and reports by civilians identified the enemy unit as the 15th NKPA Division, including the 45th, 48th, and 50th regiments, commanded by Major General Pak Sun Chol. Following the NKPA collapse, the division had been able to maintain its organization while infiltrating northward from the Pusan Perimeter and raiding the villages for food. The mission was reported to be the occupation and control of the upper Imjin valley as a base for guerrilla operations, with the Majon-ni road junction being designated one of the main objectives.¹¹

⁸ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 5; Ridge Comments, 28 Feb 56.

¹⁰ LtCol T. L. Ridge, interv with HistDiv, HQMC, 22 Aug 51.

¹¹ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 8; 1stMarDiv PIRs 21 and 22.

Enemy numbers were said to reach a total of 11,000. But that figure, like most Oriental estimates of numbers, had to be taken with the traditional grain of salt.

At any rate, the Marines had no further doubt on the morning of 2 November that they were opposed by a resolute enemy skilled at guerrilla tactics. Second Lieutenant Harvey A. Goss' platoon of How Company, reinforced with 81mm mortars, light machine guns, an artillery forward observer (FO) team and a FAC, was ambushed in a deep gorge five miles south of Majon-ni while conducting a motorized patrol. The Marines, raked by rifle and automatic small-arms fire from an unseen enemy hidden along the heights on both sides, got off only the message, "We've been hit, send help, send help" before the radio was hit.¹²

Effective deployment in the narrow road was prevented by stalled vehicles. Casualties were mounting when Second Lieutenant Kenneth A. Bott and PFC Donald O. Hoffstetter ran the gauntlet of fire in a jeep. They reached Majon-ni unhurt although one tire of the jeep had been shot.

The 3/1 CP was delayed in summoning air because of the difficulties in radio transmission.¹³ This break in communications alarmed Major Simmons, acting as SAC. He persuaded the pilot of an OY to fly him over the scene of the ambush. From his point of vantage Simmons had a good view of the deployment of Captain Corley's remaining two rifle platoons, riding artillery trucks and reinforced with heavy machine guns and 81mm mortars, which had been sent out from Majon-ni to extricate the patrol. The 81mm mortars were set up just off the road and began pounding the North Korean cliffside positions. PFC Jack Golden, a one-man task force, climbed with a 94-pound heavy machine gun to a height where he could fire down on the Communists. Marine Corsairs came on station, somewhat tardily because of the poor radio communication, and the remnants of the enemy disappeared into the hills.

Lieutenant Robert J. Fleischaker, (MC) USN, the battalion medical officer, and his assistants cared for the less critical Marine casualties. One man died during the night but most of the others were evacuated

¹² The account of the How Company ambush is derived from: 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 5; VMF-312 SAR, 8-9; 3/1 memo: "Summary of Friendly Situation as of 1600," 2 Nov 50; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 8, 3; 2/11 SAR, 16; Simmons interv, 4 Nov 55; and ltr, 14 Jan 56; Capt R. A. Doyle Comments, n. d.; Maj C. E. Corley Comments, n. d.

¹³ As a result of this experience a radio which could contact planes was later requested. 3/1 msg to CG 1stMarDiv, n. t. 2 Nov 50.

during the next day in three helicopter flights—much to the astonishment of the natives. Fleischaker and his assistants also treated Korean civilians on occasion, and the saving of a village boy's life by an emergency appendectomy did much to gain the good will of the community.¹⁴

Air Drop of Supplies Requested

Radio communication between Majon-ni and Wonsan was so uncertain, because of the intervening hill mass, that it was possible to get through for only a few hours at night. The surest means of communication was a written message carried by helicopter or OY pilots, who had to insure delivery to regiment after landing at the Wonsan airfield.¹⁵

The supply problem had already begun to pinch before the first week ended. A convoy came through from Wonsan without molestation on 29 October, but it was the last for a week. On 1 November, just to play safe, Lieutenant Colonel Ridge requested a practice air drop which went off satisfactorily. His judgment was upheld on the morning of the How Company ambush when a 3/1 supply convoy was attacked seven miles west of Wonsan (see Map 5) and forced to turn back.

First Lieutenant James D. Beeler commanded the George Company rifle platoon escorting the column of supply vehicles which was under the charge of Second Lieutenant James L. Crutchfield of H&S Company. The third truck in line, loaded with diesel fuel and C-3 composition,¹⁶ burst into flames after running into a hail of enemy rifle and automatic weapons bullets. Meanwhile the first two trucks continued until they came to a roadblock created by blowing a crater. Turning around under intense fire, they got back to the point of original ambush just as the other vehicles were trying to reverse direction; and in the confusion two trucks went off the narrow road, making a total of three lost.

A flight of three VMF-312 Corsairs led by Lieutenant Colonel J. Frank Cole dispersed an enemy force estimated at 200 to 300 men. The convoy was extricated and brought back to Wonsan after the 1st Marines sent out a task force consisting of four tanks, a tank dozer

¹⁴ LtCol V. J. Gottschalk interv, 21 Nov 55; R. A. Doyle Comments; Cdr R. J. Fleischaker Comments, n. d.

¹⁵ Col T. L. Ridge, ltr, 28 Nov 55; R. A. Doyle Comments.

¹⁶ C-3 composition is a powerful, putty-like explosive used chiefly by military engineers for demolitions work.

and six trucks filled with infantry. Personnel losses in the ambush were nine men killed and 15 wounded.¹⁷

Ridge now had to call for an air drop in earnest. Gasoline, rations, grenades and artillery, mortar and machine gun ammunition to a total of more than 21 tons were packaged at the Wonsan airfield on 2 November by Captain Hersel D. C. Blasingame's 1st Air Delivery Platoon. Four hours after the receipt of the message, the Air Force C-47s released 152 parachutes over the Majon-ni perimeter. This was one of the 141 replenishment missions of the Air Delivery Platoon in November, amounting to 864 man-hours of flying time and 377 tons of supplies dropped.¹⁸

Less than the usual amount of breakage resulted, but Colonel Puller considered it so necessary to push a truck convoy through to Majon-ni that he assigned a rifle company as guards. This mission fell to Captain Barrow's Able Company, reinforced by one platoon of Captain Lester G. Harmon's Company C engineers, Technical Sergeant Shelly Wiggins' section of 81mm mortars, and Second Lieutenant Harold L. Coffman's section of 75mm recoilless rifles. Thirty-four supply vehicles were in the column which left Wonsan at 1430 on 4 November.¹⁹

The late hour of departure was a handicap; and though an OY flew reconnaissance, the convoy had no FAC. A TACP jeep well back in the column could communicate with the OY, which relayed the message to the two VMF-312 Corsairs on station.

Barrow reasoned that because so many of the enemy road-blocks required engineer equipment, it would be advisable for Harmon's vehicles to lead, followed by First Lieutenant William A. McClelland's infantry platoon. This scheme promised well when four undefended crater roadblocks were encountered and speedily filled in by the engineers. The fifth, however, was the scene of an ambush by Red Koreans occupying the steep heights on both sides of the narrow, winding road.

The engineers soon had a hot fire fight on their hands. Taking cover behind the vehicles, they gave a good account of themselves. But the stalled trucks delayed the infantry platoon coming to their aid; and

¹⁷ S-2 1stMar to G-2 1stMarDiv, 1200 2 Nov 50; 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1115 2 Nov 50; VMF-312 SAR, 8-9; 1stTkBn SAR, 11; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 8, 2-3; 1stLt J. L. Crutchfield ltr to CMC, 23 Jan 56.

¹⁸ 1stAirDelPlat, HD, Nov 50; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 8, 3.

¹⁹ The rest of this section is based upon these sources: Maj R. H. Barrow interv, 7 Oct 55; ExecO 1stMar tel to G-3, 1stMarDiv 3 Nov 50; CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 2010 5 Nov 50; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 8, 3-4.

lack of a FAC resulted in less effective close air support than the Corsairs usually rendered. Thus, with the early November dusk approaching, Captain Barrow decided on a return to Wonsan.

By a near-miracle the trucks turned about safely on the narrow shelf that passed for a road. As the enemy long-range fire increased, Barrow ordered lights out when the column commenced its eight-mile return trip. In the darkness a truck loaded with 20 Marines missed a hairpin turn and plunged over the edge. Fortunately, the accident happened at one of the few spots where the vehicle could land on a wooded shoulder instead of hurtling through space to the rocky valley floor several hundred feet below. It was found that nothing worse than broken bones and concussion had resulted after a human chain brought the injured men back up to the road.

Lights were turned on and the convoy got back without further trouble. Barrow reported to his regimental commander at Togwon that his losses amounted to eight men wounded and 16 injured in addition to five vehicles destroyed.

Colonel Puller assured him that his failure had been due to an unavoidably late start and lack of a FAC rather than faulty judgment.

The following morning, after departing Wonsan at 0830, the air controller was not needed. Barrow had put into effect a new tactical plan based on the premise that the guerrillas of Ambush Alley would be waiting as usual for the sound of approaching trucks. He prepared a surprise, therefore, by directing his infantry platoons to take turns at leading the column on foot, keeping a thousand yards or more in advance of the vehicles.

The scheme worked to perfection as Second Lieutenant Donald R. Jones' platoon rounded a bend near the scene of yesterday's ambush and surprised about 70 guerrillas as they were eating. The ambushers had in effect been ambushed. The Marines opened up with everything they had, and only a few of the Reds escaped with their lives. There was no further trouble after the convoy got under way again, arriving at Majon-ni early in the afternoon of 5 November without a single casualty. Losses of 51 killed and three prisoners were inflicted on the enemy.

First Attack on Perimeter

The supplies were no less welcome than the Marines who brought them, for the CIC team had warned of an attack on Majon-ni at 0100 the

following night. Colonel Puller placed Able Company under the operational control of 3/1 for the defense, and the commanding officer assigned the three rifle platoons and their reinforcing elements a sector between How and George Companies on the perimeter.

This addition to his strength made it possible for Lieutenant Colonel Ridge to send out his executive officer, Major Reginald R. Myers, in command of a motorized patrol large enough to cope with a reported enemy build-up of 2000 to 3000 men about six miles northwest of Majon-ni on the Pyongyang road. Intelligence received by Corps indicated that this force was assembling in an old mining area, and a 3/1 reconnaissance in force was ordered.

The Marine task force, consisting of George and Item Companies, plus elements of Weapons Company, was supported by artillery from Majon-ni. Nothing more formidable was encountered than a few guerrillas firing at long-range, but Myers brought back 81 willing prisoners.²⁰

That night at 0130, trip flares and exploding booby traps were the prelude to the first NKPA probing attacks on the perimeter. The enemy was half an hour late, but otherwise the assault developed pretty much as the CIC team had predicted, even to the identification of elements of the 45th Regiment of the 15th NKPA Division. The assailants showed no disposition to close, and the assault turned into a desultory fire fight. At 0500, with a fog reducing visibility almost to zero, the enemy could be heard but not seen in his assault on the battalion OP. This position was located on the How Company front and manned by wiremen and artillery and mortar FO teams. When their ammunition ran out, these Marines were forced to withdraw; but Captain Thomas E. McCarthy, Second Lieutenants Charles Mattox and Charles R. Stiles with an assortment of H&S Company personnel recaptured the position the moment that the fog lifted. The enemy withdrew into the hills after the Corsairs came on station, and the action ended at 0730 with two wounded Marines representing the casualty list of 3/1 in the engagement.²¹

Able Company returned to Wonsan that morning with 619 of the prisoners who had been accumulating at Majon-ni until the stockade was

²⁰ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 5; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 9; Ridge ltr, 28 Nov 55; Narrative of Capt H. L. Coffman, n. d.

²¹ S-3 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 0945 7 Nov 50. 1stMar SAR, 10, 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 5-6; 2/11 SAR, 17; Capt C. R. Stiles ltr to HistBr, G-3, HQMC, 25 Jan 56; Corley Comments.

almost overflowing with Korean humanity. Captain Barrow packed the captives into open trucks covered with tarpaulins. This precaution was taken in order not to advertise the nature of the cargo while passing through Ambush Alley, since it might be embarrassing if the guerrillas attempted to liberate prisoners who outnumbered their keepers three to one.

Simultaneously with the return of Able Company, Colonel Puller ordered his 2d Battalion (—) to proceed via the Majon-ni road to Munchon-ni. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's mission was similar to that of Lieutenant Colonel Ridge at Majon-ni: to block enemy movement along the trails leading north and to screen civilians. The hamlet of Munchon-ni squatted near the top of the highest pass along Ambush Alley. Trucks could be supplied for only one reinforced rifle company—Easy—which departed Wonsan at 0830.

Four miles short of the objective, the motorized column entered a horseshoe bend large enough to contain all the vehicles. On the left of the road was a sheer drop; and on the right rose cliffs 200 feet in height. The last truck had just entered the bend when the first was stopped by a landslide roadblock. As the column ground to a halt the enemy opened up with rifles and automatic weapons from well camouflaged positions in the high ground at the far end of the horseshoe.²²

The Marines scrambled out of the trucks and returned the fire. But it was necessary to attack in order to dislodge the enemy, and during the advance Easy Company took a total of 46 casualties—8 KIA and 38 WIA—in addition to six wounded truck drivers. Five of the seven officers were wounded, including the company commander, Captain Charles D. Frederick.

It was estimated that the roadblock had been defended by about 200 Red Koreans, who left 61 counted dead behind them and probably removed at least as many wounded. Fifty cases of 120mm mortar ammunition were destroyed by the Marines and 300 cases of small arms cartridges.

At 1615 Sutter and the remainder of the 2/1 force arrived on the scene from Wonsan just as Able Company and its prisoners appeared from the opposite direction. Helicopters having already evacuated the Easy Company's critical casualties, Able Company brought the lightly wounded and prisoners to Wonsan without further enemy interference. Sutters' force proceeded to Munchon-ni as originally planned.

²² The account of the Easy Company ambush is derived from: 1stMar URpt (S-3) 9; 2/1 SAR, 6-7; Col A. Sutter Comments 2 Feb 56; TSgt H. T. Jones ltr, n. d.

KMC Battalion Sent to Majon-ni

At Majon-ni an OP manned by two squads of Lieutenant Ronald A. Mason's 2d Platoon of How Company was threatened with encirclement on the 8th when a Red Korean force gradually built up to an estimated 250 men worked around to the rear. The other two platoons of the company, reinforced with heavy machine guns and an Item Company platoon, were sent out from the perimeter. Artillery and mortars helped to scatter the enemy in confusion with estimated 40 per cent losses. Marine casualties were one man killed and ten wounded.²³

On 10 November, reflecting the concern of CO 1st Marines over enemy activity in the Majon-ni area, the 3d KMC Battalion arrived as reinforcements together with a convoy of supplies. CO 3/1 assigned the unit to the sector in the perimeter recently vacated by Able Company of 1/1.²⁴

The celebration of the 175th birthday of the U. S. Marine Corps was not neglected at Majon-ni. Somehow the cooks managed to bake a prodigious cake, with thinly spread jam serving as frosting, and all hands were rotated a few at a time to their company CPs to receive a slice.²⁵

That afternoon an OY of VMO-6 spotted an estimated 300 enemy troops about four miles west of Majon-ni. Under direction of the aerial observers, Captain Strohmenger's howitzers broke up this concentration.²⁶

The CIC team warned that another attack on the perimeter by the 45th NKPA Regiment would take place on the night of 11-12 November. As a prelude, General Pak made an effort to terrorize inhabitants who had kept the team informed of his plans and movements. Some of the villagers took his threats seriously enough to prepare for a hurried leavetaking, but the Civil Affairs section reassured them and put a curfew into effect.²⁷

After such a menacing build-up, the second attack on the perimeter fizzled out like a damp firecracker. A few probing jabs, beginning at 0130, were followed by a weak main assault on the KMC front

²³ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 6. 1stMar ISUM, 1200 9 Nov 50; 2/11 SAR, 17; Capt R. A. Mason Comments, 25 Jan 56. See also Corley Comments.

²⁴ 2/1 SAR, 7. Ridge, Notes.

²⁵ Geer, *The New Breed*, 215.

²⁶ VMO-6 SAR, 8; X Corps, *Guerrilla Activities X Corps Zone, Nov 50*, 1; 1stMarDiv PIR 18; 2/11 SAR, 17.

²⁷ Col T. L. Ridge interv, 22 Nov 55.

which was easily repulsed. The enemy tried again to overrun the OP but gave up the attempt after stumbling into a field of "Bouncing Betty" mines. At 0600 the last action of the Majon-ni operation came to an end as the Communists withdrew. Friendly losses were two men killed and six wounded.²⁸

This was the final appearance of the 15th NKPA Division, which apparently abandoned Majon-ni as an objective and transferred its guerrilla operations southward along the Imjin valley. The relief of the Marines and KMCs on position began the next afternoon as elements of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, U. S. 3d Infantry Division, arrived to take over the perimeter.

The Army column, including 34 Marine supply vehicles, had moved out from Wonsan at 1030 the day before. Although 2/1 (less Dog Company) had maintained its blocking positions at Munchon-ni, the convoy was stopped a few miles beyond the Marine outposts by a wrecked bridge and three large craters. Guerrillas poured in small-arms fire from the high ground which resulted in two soldiers being killed and four wounded. Two Marine trucks and a jeep were destroyed.

Extensive repairs to the road being needed, Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Blanchard, the commanding officer of 1/15, formed a defensive perimeter for the night. The column reached Majon-ni without further incident at 1530 on the 13th.²⁹

Following relief by the Army unit, the Marine battalion departed at 1015 on the 14th by truck for the Wonsan area. A total of 1395 prisoners had been taken during the 17 days of Majon-ni—a large proportion of them voluntary—and more than 4000 Korean transients screened. Enemy battle casualties were estimated at 525 killed and an unknown number wounded.³⁰

²⁸ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 6. 1stMarDiv URpt (S-3) 9. 1stMar SAR, 11; 2/11 SAR, 17. The "Bouncing Betty" type of antipersonnel mine was equipped with a spring which sent it several feet into the air to explode with maximum destructive effect.

²⁹ Air Off 1stMarDiv tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1445 12 Nov 50; S-3 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1845 12 Nov 50; LnO 1stMar tel to 1stMarDiv, 1530 14 Nov 50; G-3 1stMar Div tel to S-3 1stMar, 1600 14 Nov 50; 1stMarDiv POR 146; 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 3-4, 6-7; 2/1 SAR, 9; 1stMar SAR, 11-12; Capt Max W. Dolcater, USA, *3d Infantry Division in Korea* (Tokyo, 1953), 73; Ridge Comments, 28 Feb 56.

³⁰ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50. General Ruffner, Chief of Staff of X Corps, later commented: "Personally, I always had a feeling that the Marines did a masterful job at Majon-ni. To begin with, it was a very tough assignment and in the second place I always felt that it broke up what remained of organized units in the North Korean Army that would otherwise have given us a tremendous amount of trouble in our backyard at Wonsan. A lot of determined enemy action on our perimeter at Wonsan would have been most disconcerting, troublesome, and unquestionably slowed down our subsequent movement to the north." MajGen C. L. Ruffner ltr to MajGen E. W. Snedeker, 13 Jan 56.

Losses of the Marine battalion numbered 65—16 KIA, 4 DOW and 45 WIA. Nonbattle casualties were remarkably low, owing to strict enforcement of sanitary and health regulations.³¹

The vulnerability of a tenuous MSR must also be taken into account, and casualties of nine killed and 81 wounded or injured were incurred by Marines escorting supply convoys through Ambush Alley.

Movement of 1st Marines to Chigiyong

From the 1st Marines in the Wonsan area to the 7th Marines leading the northward advance, a distance of more than 130 road miles separated the elements of the 1st Marine Division. But the arrival of more U. S. Army units made possible a first step toward concentration.

On 29 October the 17th RCT of the 7th Infantry Division had begun landing at Iwon (see Map 2), about 60 air miles northeast of Hungnam. Other units and reinforcing elements followed until all had completed unloading by 8 November—a total of 28,995 troops, 5924 vehicles, and 30,016 short tons of cargo.³²

Transports had been sent by CTF-90 on 31 October to Moji, Japan, for the first units of the 3d Infantry Division. The 65th RCT landed at Wonsan on 5 November, but it was not until the 18th that the last elements arrived.³³ All four of the major units of X Corps—the two Army divisions as well as the 1st Marine Division and I ROK Corps—were then in the zone of operations, even though dispersed over a wide area.

The commanding generals of both Army units were "old China hands." Major General Robert H. Soule, CG 3d Infantry Division, had been U. S. military attaché in Nationalist China during the last months of the civil war. During this same period Major General David G. Barr, CG 7th Infantry Division, was senior officer of the United States Military Advisory Group in China.³⁴

On 31 October, by order of ComNavFE, JTF-7 had been dissolved and the TG 95.2 Support and Covering Group passed to the operational

³¹ 3/1 SAR 7 Oct-25 Nov 50, 7.

³² ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report," 13-14; X Corps *WD*, 29 Oct 50; X Corps

POR 35.

³³ ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report," 14-15; X Corps *WD*, 5 Nov 50; X Corps

POR 40.

³⁴ Division of Publication, Office of Public Affairs, Department of State, *United States Relations with China: With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949* (hereafter *U. S. Relations with China*), (Washington, 1949), 318, 331.

control of CTF-90, Admiral Doyle. As the center of gravity of X Corps gradually shifted to the north, General Almond moved his advanced CP from Wonsan to Hamhung on 2 November and the remainder of his headquarters on the 10th. He was joined four days later by Admiral Doyle and his staff as the *Mount McKinley* anchored off Hungnam.³⁵

The 1st Marine Division CP had displaced from Wonsan to Hungnam on 4 November as the 5th and 7th Marines carried out assignments in the north. This movement included 2/5, which had been under the operational control of the 1st Marines for patrolling missions in the Wonsan area. Not until a week later was General Smith able to plan the northward advance of Colonel Puller's regiment. On the 12th, X Corps OpnO 6 directed the 3d Infantry Division to relieve elements of the 1st Marines. The mission of the Army division was to protect the left flank of X Corps and prepare for an advance to the west.³⁶

For a time it had appeared that 1/1, which had the responsibility for security in the Wonsan area after its return from Kojo, might be sent to Chongjin, 220 air miles northeast of Wonsan, in accordance with X Corps OI-13 of 25 October. This battalion was designated for the mission in 1stMarDiv OpnO 10-50, issued on 5 November, but four days later X Corps cancelled this requirement.³⁷

Before departing the Wonsan area, Puller's headquarters had another false alarm. Small craft sighted by air on 8 November, and two mysterious explosions, led to the report that 500 to 1000 enemy boats were attempting an amphibious landing ten miles north of Wonsan. An armored patrol of Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, was sent to investigate but reported no contact.³⁸

X Corps directed that upon the relief of the Marines by the 3d Infantry Division, the 3d and 5th KMC Battalions, which had been under the operational control of RCT-1, would then be attached to the Army unit.³⁹

³⁵ ComPhibGruOne, "Operations Report," 14-15; ComNavFE msg to NavFE, 0204 30 Oct 50; X Corps POR 150; LtGen E. A. Craig ltr, 20 Feb 56.

³⁶ X Corps OpnO 6, 12 Nov 50.

³⁷ 1stMar OpnO 19-50, 5 Nov 50; X Corps msg X 14010 9 Nov 50; Smith, *Notes*, 459-460. 1/5 had been initially assigned as the standby BLT but was replaced by 1/1 on its return from Kojo.

³⁸ 1stMar tels to G-3 1stMarDiv 1030 and 1910, 9 Nov 50; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 9; 1stTkBn SAR, 14. Ruffner ltr 13 Jan 56.

³⁹ X Corps OpnO 6, 12 Nov 50; Smith, *Notes*, 492-493; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, 73; CG 1stMarDiv msg to subordinate units, 2305 11 Nov 50.

After lack of transport imposed a delay of two days, 1/1 initiated the northward movement of RCT-1 by rail and closed Chigyong, eight miles southwest of Hamhung, by 1820, 14 November. A motor convoy followed.⁴⁰

Relief of 2/1(-), which had been holding screening and blocking positions on Ambush Alley, was completed on the 15th by the 3d Battalion of the 15th Infantry. Other Army elements relieved Dog Company in the rear area near Wonsan. On the 16th 2/1 moved by rail to Chigyong, followed by 3/1 and the last elements of RCT-1 the next day.⁴¹

Thus the 1st Marine Division achieved a relative and temporary degree of concentration. The farthest distance between components had been reduced from 130 to less than 60 miles by the middle of November, but a new dispersion of units was already in progress.

⁴⁰ 1stMarDiv *POR* 145; Smith, *Notes*, 494; 1/1 msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1845 15 Nov 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, 73.

⁴¹ 2/1 *SAR*, 9-10; S-3 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 2245 15 Nov 50; 3/1 *SAR* 7 Oct-25 Nov 50; 1stMar *SAR*, 12; 1stMarDiv *POR* 154; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, 73; Sutter Comments, 2 Feb 56.

CHAPTER V

Red China to the Rescue

*Chinese in X Corps Zone—Introducing the New Enemy—
Communist Victory in Civil War—Organization of the CCF—
The Chinese Peasant as a Soldier—CCF Arms and Equipment
—Red China's "Hate America" Campaign—CCF Strategy and
Tactics*

UP TO THIS TIME the 1st Marine Division had virtually been waging two separate wars. In the southern zone, as was related in the last two chapters, blocking and screening operations were conducted by RCT-1 against NKPA remnants. RCT-7, with RCT-5 in reserve, had meanwhile been confronted in the north by some of the first Chinese Communist troops to enter the Korean conflict.

In order to trace the movements of these two Marine regiments, it will be necessary to go back over chronological ground previously covered. Division OpnO 18-50, issued on 28 October to implement X Corps OI-13 and supplementary telephone orders received from Corps, assigned RCT-7 the mission of proceeding from Wonsan to Hamhung, prepared for an advance to the Manchurian border 135 miles to the north. RCT-5 was assigned a zone behind RCT-7 (see end-paper maps).

Plans for the northward advance brought up the vital problem of providing security for the 78-mile main supply route (MSR) and the parallel railway stretching along the coast from Wonsan to Hamhung. Division orders of the 28th assigned RCT-5 (less 2/5), temporarily under the operational control of RCT-1, the responsibility for the security of the Munchon and Yonghung areas, 16 and 57 miles north of Wonsan respectively. Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, attached

to RCT-5, had orders to establish blocking positions on three main roads joining the MSR from the west¹

RCT-7, after being partially issued cold weather clothing at Wonsan, moved by road and rail to the Hamhung area during the last three days of October. The 1st Motor Transport Battalion and Division Reconnaissance Company were attached along with other reinforcing units, since this regiment had been designated to lead the advance of the 1st Marine Division to the Manchurian border.²

RCT-5 completed a motor march meanwhile from its assembly area near Wonsan to assigned positions along the Wonsan-Hamhung MSR. General Almond's OI-15 (30 October) had directed the dispatch of two Marine RCTs to the Hamhung area, which meant that Lieutenant Colonel Murray's regiment was to follow RCT-7. On the 31st General Smith ordered him to advance a battalion to Chigyong, eight miles southwest of Hamhung. Murray selected his 1st Battalion and directed that one of its companies be detached to relieve an RCT-7 company guarding the Advance Supply Point at Yonpo Airfield, five miles southwest of Hungnam.³

Two additional Marine units were assigned to assembly areas along the MSR. The 1st Tank Battalion (less Company C, attached to the 1st Marines) moved up to Munchon and regained its Company A. Since the landing of the 11th Marines (less the battalions attached to RCTs) the artillery regiment (-) had occupied positions at Munpyong-ni, five miles northwest of Wonsan.⁴

When four days passed without enemy contacts along the MSR, General Almond decided to expedite the movement of RCT-5 to the Hamhung area. In a conference with General Smith on 2 November, he outlined a plan for using patrols instead of blocking positions. Under this system RCT-1, with elements of the 1st Tank Battalion, would be made responsible for MSR security as far north as Munchon.

¹ 1stMarDiv *OpnO* 18-50, 28 Oct 50; Smith, *Notes*, 463-464.

² 7thMar *SAR*, 12; CO 7thMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, n.t., 28 Oct 50; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0850 1 Nov 50; 1stMarDiv *OpnO* 18-50, 28 Oct 50. See the detailed account of the move in Col R. G. Davis Comments, 7 May 56. RCT-7 did not receive all of its cold weather clothing until after it reached Koto-ri. MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 18 Jul 56; LtCol M. E. Roach Comments, 17 May 56; LtCol W. D. Sawyer Comments, 7 Sep 56.

³ CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 5thMar, 2118 31 Oct 50; CO 5thMar msg to CO 1/5, 1013 1 Nov 50; Smith, *Notes*, 463-464; 5thMar *SAR*, 8-9; 5thMar *URpt* 2; 1/5 *SAR*, 5; 3/5 *SAR*, 5; Col A. L. Bowser Comments, 23 Apr 56.

⁴ 1stMarDiv msg to 1stTkBn, 1750 31 Oct 50; 1stTkBn *SAR*, 11. The move was made 1 Nov. 11thMar *URpt* 2-28 Oct 50.

The 54-mile stretch between Munchon and Chigyong would be assigned to the Special Operations Company, USA, and Korean agents, both under Corps control. As soon as these arrangements could be put into effect, RCT-5 would be free to advance to Hamhung. That same day, 2 November, the 2d Battalion was released from operational control of RCT-1 and moved to Hamhung.⁵

Ironically, the 2d was also the date of the first guerrilla raid on the MSR. A patrol from the 1st Tank Battalion was sent by Division to the aid of the Special Operations Company, which had reported an attack west of Munchon resulting in a wound casualty and loss of equipment. The Marines drove the guerrillas back into the hills.⁶

Chinese in X Corps Zone

Red Korean guerrilla activities were overshadowed by confirmation of reports that organized CCF units had appeared in the X Corps zone as well as on the Eighth Army front. After crossing the Yalu, they had secretly infiltrated through the mountains, marching by night and hiding by day from air observation. Their numbers and intentions remained a mystery at this date, but late in October the 8th U. S. Cavalry Regiment and the 6th ROK Division were surprised by Chinese in northwest Korea and badly mauled.⁷

First-hand evidence of CCF penetrations in northeast Korea was obtained by three Marine officers of RCT-7. Shortly after arrival in the Hamhung area, the regimental commander sent out reconnoitering parties in preparation for the northward advance of 1 November. The 1/7 patrol on 31 October consisted of a fire team in three jeeps led by Captain Myron E. Wilcox and First Lieutenants William G. Graeber and John B. Wilson. As a result of their visit to the CP of the 26th ROK Regiment of the 3d ROK Division, which RCT-7 was scheduled to relieve near Sudong (see Map 7) on 2 November, the Marine officers reported to their regimental headquarters that they had seen one Chinese prisoner.⁸

⁵ CG's Diary in X Corps *WD*, 2 Nov 50. Smith, *Notes*, 463-464. The Special Operations Company was a commando-type U. S. Army organization, generally employed in such operations as raids and reconnaissance. The strength, weapons, and organization depended on the mission.

⁶ 11thMar tel to G-2 1stMarDiv, 1300 2 Nov 50; 1stMarDiv *PIR* 9.

⁷ EUSAK *WDs* 29 Oct-1 Nov 50.

⁸ Maj J. B. Wilson and Capt W. G. Graeber interv, 20 Oct 55.

As a matter of fact, the ROK regiment took 16 Chinese prisoners in all. They were identified as belonging to two regiments of the 124th CCF Division, one of the three divisions of the 42d CCF Army. This force had crossed the Yalu about 16 October, according to POW testimony, and moved southward without being observed into the Chosin Reservoir area during the following ten days.⁹

Not only was Colonel Litzenberg aware that he would be facing Chinese adversaries in this area; he also suspected that they had infiltrated toward his left rear. He sent a patrol consisting of 20 men and five jeeps of Recon Company as far as Chigyong on the 31st without making any enemy contacts. The following morning CO RCT-7 ordered Recon Company in 21 jeeps to conduct a reconnaissance to the Huksu-ri area, approximately 45 miles northwest of Hamhung. After bypassing a blown bridge, First Lieutenant Ralph B. Crossman's force dug in for the night 4500 yards short of its objective. Shots were exchanged several times that night and early the following morning with North Korean guerrillas in company strength, but the patrol returned with a negative report as far as Chinese forces were concerned.¹⁰

News was received on 1 November of the heavy losses taken by the 1st Cavalry Division at the hands of the Chinese in northwest Korea. There was no change, however, in Corps orders calling for the advance of Litzenberg's regiment to the border. Koto-ri, 23 road miles north of Majon-dong, was the first objective. The right flank of the Eighth Army was about 60 air miles southwest of Majon-dong, so that RCT-7 must advance without protection for its left flank except for Division Recon Company, which was to be relieved as soon as possible by RCT-1.

"Under these circumstances," commented General Smith at a later date, "there was no alternative except to continue forward in the hope that the Eighth Army situation would right itself and that we would succeed in our efforts to close up the entire 1st Marine Division behind RCT-7."¹¹

⁹ Smith, *Notes*, 534; 1stMarDiv *PIR* 4; 1stMarDiv *SAR*, 30. These prisoners were later interrogated by Gen Almond himself and formed the basis of the first official report of Chinese intervention. Almond Comments, 21 Jun 56; FECOM msg C 67881, 31 Oct 50.

¹⁰ Maj R. B. Crossman, Capt C. R. Puckett, and Capt D. W. Sharon interv, 20 Oct 55; HqBn, 1stMarDiv (hereafter HqBn) *URpt* 8 (*Supplementary*), 2. Maj Webb D. Sawyer, CO 2/7 and Maj James F. Lawrence also made helicopter reconnaissances of the same ground looking for possible flanking routes to Koto-ri. Sawyer Comments, 7 Sep 56.

¹¹ Smith, *Notes*, 523-524. See also: Smith, *Chronicle*, 70.

Introducing the New Enemy

Here it is hardly a digression to pause for a brief survey of the organization, tactics and aims of the new enemy who was about to prolong the Korean conflict by intervening on behalf of the beaten NKPA. The powerful, ever-ready military instrument which the Chinese Reds knew as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had been forged and tempered in the fires of civil strife. It came into being in the late summer of 1927 during the abortive Nanchang rebellion. Following their defeat, the Communists found a refuge in Kiangsi Province of south China and gained strength as disaffected Kuomintang units came over to their side.¹²

The infant PLA managed with difficulty to survive the first four "bandit suppression campaigns" waged by Chiang Kai-shek. When he launched his fifth in 1933, the Chinese Reds planned the celebrated "Long March" which has become one of their most cherished traditions. Breaking out of Chiang's encirclement in October, 1934, they took a circuitous, 6000-mile route to avoid Nationalist armies. Of the 90,000 who started, only 20,000 were left a year later when the PLA reached Yen-an in Shensi Province.¹³

This destination in northwest China gave the Communists a refuge with Mongolia and Soviet Russia at their backs. There Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues alternately fought and negotiated with the Government. Finally, in 1941, the Communists and Nationalists agreed to cease fighting one another in order to make common cause against the Japanese invaders.

The Communists took advantage of their membership in the People's Political Council—a Nationalist-sponsored organization which theoretically united all factions in China against the Japanese—to continue their "boring-from-within" tactics. Chiang's estimate of his troublesome allies was summed up in a quotation attributed to him in 1941:

You think it is important that I have kept the Japanese from expanding. . . . I tell you it is more important that I have kept the Communists from spreading. The Japanese are a disease of the skin; the Communists are a disease of the heart.¹⁴

¹² Richard L. Walker, *China under Communism* (New Haven, 1954), 111–112; Order of Battle Branch, Office of the AC/S G-2, HQ Eighth United States Army (Fwd), *CCF Army Histories* (hereafter *CCF Army Histories*), 1.

¹³ *U. S. Relations with China*, 43–44, 207, 323.

¹⁴ Quoted in George Moorad, *Lost Peace in China* (New York, 1949), 33.

Communist Victory in Civil War

In late 1945, with the Japanese no longer a menace, the grapple for mastery began anew. Chiang Kai-shek held the material and moral advantage as a result of the arms and other assistance supplied by the United States.

The Nationalists controlled all the important centers of population and industry and the major lines of communication. The Communists, with their backs to the wall, eagerly accepted the United States proposal for a cease fire in January 1946. General George C. Marshall, as personal representative of President Truman, flew out to Nanking in December, 1945, and tried for 12 months to arrange a workable compromise between two irreconcilable ideologies. Meanwhile, the Reds retrained and reequipped their forces with the vast supply of weapons which had fallen into their hands as a result of the collapse of the Japanese Army in Manchuria in August, 1945. By the spring of 1947, they were ready again for war. They denounced the truce and recommenced military operations. From that time the balance of power swung steadily in their favor.¹⁵

Although the PLA had seized the initiative, the Government still had an army of about 2,700,000 men facing 1,150,000 Reds, according to estimates of American military advisers in China. But Chiang was committed to a positional warfare; his forces were dangerously overextended, and for reasons of prestige and political considerations he hesitated to withdraw from areas of dubious military value. Mao's hard and realistic strategy took full advantage of these lapses. As a result the Communists won the upper hand in Manchuria and Shantung and by the end of the year had massed large forces in central China.

Early in 1948, the year of decision, the PLA recaptured Yen-an along with thousands of Government troops. But the most crushing Communist victory of all came with the surrender of Tsinan, the capital of Shantung, and its garrison of 85,000 to 100,000 Nationalists.

In his summary of Nationalist reverses, Major General David G. Barr, senior officer of the United States Military Advisory Group in China, reported to the Department of the Army on 16 November 1948:

No battle has been lost since my arrival due to lack of ammunition and equipment. Their [the Chinese Nationalists'] military debacles in my opinion

¹⁵ *U. S. Relations with China*, 352-363.

can all be attributed to the world's worst leadership and many other morale destroying factors that lead to a complete loss of will to fight.¹⁶

By the early spring of 1949 the military collapse of the Nationalists had gone so far that the enemy controlled the major centers of population and the railroads from Manchuria south to the Yangtze Valley. Nanking, Hangkow, and Shanghai were soon to fall into the hands of Communists whose military strength increased every day as they captured Nationalist arms and were joined by Nationalist deserters. Perhaps the best summary of the Chinese Civil War was put in a few words by Dean Acheson, the U. S. Secretary of State:

The Nationalist armies did not have to be defeated; they disintegrated.¹⁷

In addition to the aid extended during World War II, Washington had authorized grants and credits to Nationalist China amounting to two billion dollars since V-J Day. Nor was American assistance confined to arms and monetary grants. From 1945-1947 the occupation of certain key cities in North China, e. g., Tientsin, Peiping, Tsingtao¹⁸ etc., by sizeable U. S. Marine forces held those bases secure for the Nationalist government and permitted the release of appreciable numbers of Chiang's soldiers for offensive operations, who would otherwise have been tied up in garrison type duty.¹⁹

The Marines, upon their withdrawal, were directed to turn over vast stores of weapons and munitions to the Chinese Nationalists. In addition, the Nationalists were "sold" large quantities of military and civilian war surplus property, with a total procurement cost of more than a billion dollars, for a bargain price of 232 million.²⁰

Organization of the CCF

Although the victorious army continued to be called the People's Liberation Army by the Chinese Reds themselves, it was known as the Chinese Communist Forces by commentators of Western nations. At the head of the new police state were the 72 regular and alternate members of the Central Committee, or Politburo. Formed at the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, this body consisted for the most part of

¹⁶ *U. S. Relations with China*, 358.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

¹⁸ Marines remained in Tsingtao until early 1949.

¹⁹ The first blows between the Marines and the Chinese Communists took place not in Korea, but along the Peiping-Tientsin highway as early as October, 1945.

²⁰ *U. S. Relations with China*, xiv-xv.

Mao's close associates—leaders identified with the revolutionary movement from the beginning.

From top to bottom of the Chinese state, the usual Communist dualism of high political and military rank prevailed. The highest governing body, the People's Revolutionary Military Council, consisted of leaders holding both positions. After they determined policies, the execution was left to the General Headquarters of the army.²¹

This organization comprised a general staff section, a rear Services section and a general political bureau. Largest CCF administrative unit was the field army, which reported directly to Headquarters. Composed of two or more army groups, the field army had a small headquarters of its own.

The army group, as the largest unit encountered by UN forces, was comparable to an army in the American military system. CCF army groups in Korea consisted of two to four armies with an average total strength of 60,000–120,000 troops. Equivalent to an American corps was the CCF army, an organization including three infantry divisions and an artillery regiment. Thus the average strength of a CCF army was about 30,000 men.

The CCF infantry division, with a paper strength of 10,000 men, averaged from 7,000 to 8,500 men in Korea, according to various estimates. Triangular in organization, it included three infantry regiments and an artillery battalion.

Divisional units consisted of reconnaissance and engineer companies of about 100 men, a 150-man transport company, a 100-man guard company, and a 60-man communications company. Transport companies had only draft animals and carts, since little motor transport was organic to a CCF division at that time.

The CCF infantry regiment, averaging about 2,200 men in the field, broke down into the following units: three infantry battalions; an artillery battery of four to six guns; a mortar and bazooka company; a guard company; a transportation company; a medical unit with at-

²¹ Unless otherwise noted, this section is based on the following sources: GHQ, FECOM, *Order of Battle Information, Chinese Third Field Army* (1 Mar 51) and *Chinese Fourth Field Army* (7 Nov 50); 164-MISDI, ADVATIS, and ADVATIS FWD rpts in EUSAK WDs, *passim*; X Corps PIRs; 1stMarDiv PIRs; 1stMarDiv SAR, 30; G-2 SAR, 16-18; Far East Command, Allied Translator and Interpreter Service (ATIS), *Enemy Documents, Korean Operations, passim*; Fleet Marine Force Pacific (FMFPac), *Chinese Communist Forces Tactics in Korea*, 5-11; Maj R. C. W. Thomas, "The Chinese Communist Forces in Korea," *The Army Quarterly*, Oct 52 (digested in *Military Review*, xxxii, no. 11 (Feb 53), 87); LtCol Robert F. Rigg, *Red China's Fighting Hordes* (Harrisburg, 1951); Walker: *China Under Communism*.

tached stretcher personnel (often composed of impressed civilians) and a combined reconnaissance and signal company.

The CCF infantry battalion, with an authorized strength of 852 men and an actual strength of perhaps 700, consisted of a mortar and machine gun or heavy weapons company, a signal squad, a medical squad and a small battalion headquarters in addition to the three rifle companies of about 170 men each. Each of the latter was composed of a headquarters platoon, a 60mm mortar platoon and three rifle platoons.

The CCF artillery battalion, organic to every division, must be considered theoretical rather than actual as far as Korean operations of 1950 are concerned. As a rule, only a few horse-drawn or pack howitzers were brought into action by an infantry division depending chiefly on mortars.

The Chinese Peasant as a Soldier

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the CCF, from the viewpoint of a Western observer, was the lack of any official provision for the honorable discharge of a soldier. Once he became a cog in the CCF military machine, a man remained in the ranks until he was killed, captured, became a deserter, or was incapacitated for active service by reason of wounds, disease or old age.

Theoretically depending on a "volunteer" system, the recruiting officers of the CCF knew how to apply political or economic pressure so that a man found it prudent to become a soldier. After putting on a uniform, he was vigorously indoctrinated in political as well as military subjects.

Both self-criticism and criticism of comrades were encouraged at platoon meetings held for that purpose. Every recruit was subjected to a course of psychological mass coercion known to the Chinese as *hsi-nao* and to the non-Communist world as "brain-washing." Spying on comrades and reporting political or military deviations was a soldier's duty.²²

Inured to hardships from birth, the peasant in the ranks did not find that the military service demanded many unwonted privations. He was used to cold and hunger, and he could make long daily marches on a diet which the American soldier would have regarded as both in-

²² Walker, *China under Communism*, 51-76.

sufficient and monotonous. It would appear, however, that some of the Western legends about Oriental stoicism and contempt for death were a little far-fetched. At any rate, the CCF had to deal with the problem of straggling from the battlefield; and U. S. Marines in Korea could attest that on occasion the Chinese soldier showed evidences of fear and low morale. Nor was he as much of a fanatic as might have been expected, considering the extent of his political indoctrination.

Although the CCF departed in most respects from the Chinese military past, the policy of organizing units along ethnic lines was retained. Men from the same village were formed into a company; companies from the same area into battalions; and battalions from the same province into regiments or divisions. Replacements were drawn from the localities where the unit was originally recruited.²³

On the other hand, the Chinese Reds broke with both Nationalist and Communist tradition in their policy of avoiding a permanent rank system. Officers (in Korea denoted by red piping on their sleeves) were divided into company, field, and general groups. The company commander and political officer held about equal authority in an infantry unit, and the only NCOs mentioned in CCF field reports are sergeants and squad leaders.²⁴

CCF Arms and Equipment

The CCF depended on a wide assortment of weapons, so that it was not uncommon to find several different kinds of rifles of varying calibers in the same regiment. Japanese arms acquired after the surrender of 1945; Russian arms furnished by the Soviets; and American, German, Czech, British, and Canadian arms taken from the Chinese Nationalists—these were some of the diverse sources. And it is a tribute to the adaptability of the Chinese Reds that they managed to utilize such military hand-me-downs without disastrous confusion.

Paper work was at a minimum in a force which kept few records and numbered a great many illiterates. As for logistics, each soldier was given a four-day food supply in the winter of 1950–1951 when he crossed the Yalu—usually rice, millet or soy beans carried in his pack. Afterwards, food was to be procured locally by extortion or confisca-

²³ FMFPac, *CCF Tactics*, 9.

²⁴ ADVATIS FWD Rpt 0213 in EUSAK *WD*, 14 Nov 50; G-3 *SAR*, 21–22.

tion, though the Communists were fond of using such euphemisms as "purchase" or "donation" to denote those processes.²⁵

The CCF soldiers who fought in Korea during the winter of 1950-1951 wore a two-piece, reversible mustard-yellow and white uniform of quilted cotton and a heavy cotton cap with fur-lined ear flaps. Issued to the troops just before crossing the Yalu, the quilted cotton blouse and trousers were worn over the standard summer uniform and any other layers of clothing the soldier may have acquired.

The first CCF units in action had canvas shoes with crepe rubber soles. Later arrivals were issued a half-leather shoe or even a full leather boot. Chinese footwear was of poor quality and few of the troops wore gloves in cold weather. The consequence was a high rate of frostbitten hands and feet.²⁶

The CCF soldier usually carried a shawl-like blanket in addition to the small pack containing his food as well as personal belongings. These were few and simple, for it could never be said that the Chinese Reds pampered their soldiers.

China's "Hate America" Campaign

It was essentially an Asiatic guerrilla army which came to the rescue of beaten Red Korea in the autumn of 1950. CCF strategic aims had been summed up years before by Mao Tse-tung himself:

We are against guerrilla-ism of the Red Army, yet we must admit its guerrilla character. We are opposed to protracted campaigns and a strategy of quick decision while we believe in a strategy of protracted war and campaigns of quick decision. As we are opposed to fixed operational fronts and positional warfare, we believe in unfixed operational fronts and a war of maneuvers. We are against simply routing the enemy, and believe in a war of annihilation. We are against two-fistism in strategic directions and believe in one-fistism. We are against the institution of a big rear and believe in a small rear. We

²⁵ There is some evidence of an attempt to supply troops from division stocks. See ADVATIS 1245 in EUSAK WD, 4 Dec 50, and 164-MISDI-1176 in *Ibid.*, 1 Nov 50. Normal CCF doctrine, however, held that a division should be committed to combat for about six days and then withdrawn to replenish its supplies and replace casualties. This procedure, naturally, definitely limited the extent of an attack by the CCF and prevented the maintenance of the momentum for an extended offensive. MajGen D. G. Barr testimony in *MacArthur Hearing*, 2650; Bowser Comments, 23 Apr 56.

²⁶ X Corps msg X 11792; G-2 SAR, 21-22; SSgt Robert W. Tallent, "New Enemy," *Leatherneck Magazine*, xxxiv, No. 2 (Feb 51), 12-15; 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 11.

are against absolute centralized command and believe in a relatively centralized command.²⁷

Mao was held in such reverence as a veteran Chinese Communist leader that long passages of his writings were committed to memory. His strategic ideas, therefore, deserve more than passing consideration. In the first place, his concept of war itself differed from that of Western nations.

"There are only two kinds of war in history, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary," he wrote. "We support the former and oppose the latter. Only a revolutionary war is holy."²⁸

From the Western viewpoint, Mao's followers had fought four different wars in close succession—against the Chinese Nationalists from 1927 to 1936; against the Japanese from 1937 to 1945; against the Nationalists in a second war from 1946 to 1949; and against the United Nations, beginning in 1950. But Mao and his colleagues saw this period as one prolonged war in which revolutionists were pitted against counter-revolutionary adversaries. The fact that the conflict had lasted for a generation did not disturb Communist leaders who envisioned a continual state of war "to save mankind and China from destruction."

"The greatest and most ruthless counter-revolutionary war is pressing on us," continued Mao. "If we do not hoist the banner of revolutionary war, a greater part of the human race will face extinction."²⁹

Early in December, 1949, following Red China's victory over the Nationalists, Mao arrived in Moscow for a series of talks with Stalin which lasted until 4 March 1950. The decisions reached in these conferences are not known, but it was probably no coincidence that the Communist puppet state in North Korea violated the world's peace a few months later. It is perhaps also significant that the head of the Soviet Military Mission in Tokyo, Lieutenant General Kuzma Derev-yanko, was absent from Tokyo during the same period and reported in Moscow.³⁰

It was the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese calendar, and a "Resist America, Aid Korea" movement was launched in Red China when the United States came to the aid of the Republic of Korea. Every dictatorship must have some object of mass hatred, and Mao found the

²⁷ Mao Tse-tung: *Strategic Problems of Chinese Revolutionary Wars*, Ed by LtCol F. B. Nihart (Quantico, 1951), 17-18. Adapted from an English translation published in the *China Digest*, of Hong Kong.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ LtGen E. M. Almond Comments, 22 Jun 56.

United States ideal for the purpose. A "Hate America" campaign was inaugurated after the CCF intervention, with the following serving as an example of anti-American propaganda:

This [the United States] is the paradise of gangsters, swindlers, rascals, special agents, fascist germs, speculators, debauchers, and all the dregs of mankind. This is the world's manufactory and source of such crimes as reaction, darkness, cruelty, decadence, corruption, debauchery, oppression of man by man, and cannibalism. This is the exhibition ground of all the crimes which can possibly be committed by mankind. This is a living hell, ten times, one hundred times, one thousand times worse than can possibly be depicted by the most sanguinary of writers. Here the criminal phenomena that issue forth defy the imagination of human brains. Conscientious persons can only wonder how the spiritual civilization of mankind can be depraved to such an extent.³¹

Communist doctrine held that the people must be incited by such propaganda to a constant high pitch of emotional intensity for the sacrifices demanded by total war. The prevalence of illiteracy made it necessary to depend largely on street-corner loud speakers blaring forth radio harangues. Realistic broadcasts of the torture and execution of political deviates were also heard at times, and such spectacles were exhibited for the edification of the public.³²

CCF Strategy and Tactics

CCF strategy was so rudimentary at first that its basic tenets could be summed up in a 16-word principle adopted by the Central Committee:

Enemy advancing, we retreat; enemy entrenched, we harass; enemy exhausted, we attack; enemy retreating, we pursue.³³

But as time went on, other principles were added. Mao favored a planned defensive-offensive as the only valid strategy against superior enemy numbers. He made it plain, however, that any withdrawal was to be merely temporary as the preliminary to advancing and striking at the first advantageous opportunity. And he reiterated that annihilation of the enemy must always be the final goal of strategy.³⁴

It was in the field of tactics that the essentially guerrilla character of the CCF was most fully revealed. Since Communist dialectics in-

³¹ Excerpt from a series of three articles, "Look, This is the American Way of Life," used as a primer in the "Hate America" campaign. Quoted in Walker, *China Under Communism*, 13.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Mao, *Strategic Problems*, 31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

sisted that there was a correct (Marxist) and an incorrect ("petty bourgeois" or "opportunist" or "reactionary") way of doing everything, CCF tactics were reduced to principles whenever possible.

A generation of warfare against material odds had established a pattern of attack which proved effective against armies possessing an advantage in arms and equipment. One Marine officer has aptly defined a Chinese attack as "assembly on the objective."³⁵ The coolie in the CCF ranks had no superior in the world at making long approach marches by night and hiding by day, with as many as fifty men sharing a hut or cave and subsisting on a few handfuls of rice apiece. Night attacks were so much the rule that any exception came as a surprise. The advancing columns took such natural routes as draws or stream beds, deploying as soon as they met resistance. Combat groups then peeled off from the tactical columns, one at a time, and closed with rifles, submachine guns, and grenades.

Once engaged and under fire, the attackers hit the ground. Rising at any lull, they came on until engaged again; but when fully committed, they did not relinquish the attack even when riddled with casualties. Other Chinese came forward to take their places, and the build-up continued until a penetration was made, usually on the front of one or two platoons. After consolidating the ground, the combat troops then crept or wriggled forward against the open flank of the next platoon position. Each step of the assault was executed with practiced stealth and boldness, and the results of several such penetrations on a battalion front could be devastating.³⁶

The pattern of attack was varied somewhat to suit different occasions. As an example of an action in which the CCF used mortars, the following is quoted from a Marine field report:

Five to nine men [CCF] patrols were sent out forward of the main body in an attempt to locate or establish [our] front lines and flanks. After these patrols had withdrawn or been beaten off, white phosphorus mortar shells were dropped about the area in an attempt to inflict casualties. By closely watching the area for movement in removing these casualties, they attempted to establish the location of our front lines. After establishing what they believed were the front lines, white phosphorous shells were dropped in the lines and used as markers. While this was taking place, the assault troops crawled forward to distances as close as possible to the front lines . . . [and] attacked at a given signal. The signal in this particular instance was three

³⁵ Bowser Comments, 23 Apr 56.

³⁶ The above description was derived from S. L. A. Marshall, "CCF in the Attack" (EUSAK Staff Memorandum ORO-S-26), 5 Jan 51.

blasts of a police whistle. The attacking troops then rose and in a perfect skirmish formation rushed the front line.³⁷

It might be added that this attack resulted in a CCF penetration on a platoon front. Friendly lines were restored only by dawn counter-attacks.

The ambush was a favorite resort of Chinese commanders. Whatever the form of attack, the object was usually fractionalization of an opposing force, so that the segments could be beaten in detail by a local superiority in numbers.

CCF attacking forces ranged as a rule from a platoon to a company in size, being continually built up as casualties thinned the ranks. Reports by newspaper correspondents of "hordes" and "human sea" assaults were so unrealistic as to inspire a derisive Marine comment:

"How many hordes are there in a Chinese platoon?"

After giving CCF tactics due credit for their merits, some serious weaknesses were also apparent. The primitive logistical system put such restrictions on ammunition supplies, particularly artillery and mortar shells, that a Chinese battalion sometimes had to be pulled back to wait for replenishments if the first night's attack failed. At best the infantry received little help from supporting arms.³⁸

POW interrogations revealed that in many instances each soldier was issued 80 rounds of small arms ammunition upon crossing the Yalu. This was his total supply. The artillery and mortars were so limited that they must reserve their fire for the front line while passing up lucrative targets in the rear areas. Some attempts were made to bring reserve stocks up to forward supply dumps about 30 miles behind the front, but not much could be accomplished with animal and human transport.

A primitive communications system also accounted for CCF shortcomings. The radio net extended only down to the regimental level, and telephones only to battalions or occasionally companies. Below the battalion, communication depended on runners or such signaling devices as bugles, whistles, flares, and flashlights.³⁹

³⁷ 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 9. The remainder of the section, unless otherwise noted, is based on: *Ibid.*; G-2 SAR, 13-45; 1stMar SAR, 28-29; 5thMar SAR, 38-44; EUSAK Combat Information Bulletin No. 4; FMFPac, *CCF Tactics*, 1-5.

³⁸ These weaknesses, however, were confined to the early months of CCF participation in the Korean conflict. Following the peace talks in the summer of 1951—an interlude with the enemy exploited for military purposes—the Chinese gradually built up to an equality with UN forces in mortars and artillery.

³⁹ 164-MISDI-1232, 1260, 1266, 1274, and 1275 in EUSAK W/D, 19, 26, and 28 Nov and 1 Dec 50; ADVATIS FWD #1. Rpt 0271 in EUSAK W/D 4 Dec 50; X Corps PIR 81, Annex 2; G-2 SAR, 17-18.

The consequence was a tactical rigidity which at times was fatal. Apparently CCF commanding officers had little or no option below the battalion level. A battalion once committed to the attack often kept on as long as its ammunition lasted, even if events indicated that it was beating out its brains against the strongest part of the opposing line. The result in many such instances was tactical suicide.

After these defects are taken into full account, however, the Chinese soldier and the Korean terrain made a formidable combination. Ironically, Americans fighting the first war of the new Atomic Age were encountering conditions reminiscent of the border warfare waged by their pioneer forefathers against the Indians. These aborigines, too, were outweighed in terms of weapons and equipment. But from time immemorial the night has always been the ally of the primitive fighter, and surprise his best weapon. Thus the Americans in Korea, like their ancestors on the Western plains, could never be sure when the darkness would erupt into flame as stealthy foes seemed to spring from the very earth.

CHAPTER VI

The Battle of Sudong

The MSR from Hungnam to Yudam-ni—ROKs Relieved by 7th Marines—CCF Counterattack at Sudong—Two Marine Battalions Cut Off—End of NKPA Tank Regiment—The Fight for How Hill—Disappearance of CCF Remnants—Koto-ri Occupied by 7th Marines

THE COASTAL PLAIN of the Songchon estuary is one of the most spacious flatlands in all North Korea. Its 100 square miles divide into two irrigation districts, which regulate cultivation in a virtual sea of rice paddies. The Songchon River, swollen by tributaries in its descent from the northern hinterland, nourishes this agricultural complex before flowing into the Sea of Japan.

Flanking the mouth of the waterway are the port city of Hungnam to the north and the town of Yonpo, with its modern airfield, to the south. Eight miles upstream lies Hamhung, an important transportation center with a population of approximately 85,000 Koreans and Japanese in 1940.

Hamhung straddles the main railroad connecting Wonsan and Sonjin as it follows the coastal route to the border of Soviet Russia. A narrow-gauge line (2' 6") stems from Hungnam and passes through Hamhung before penetrating into the mountainous heart of North Korea. Parallel to this railroad is the only highway that could be utilized by the transport of the 1st Marine Division for its advance to the north.

The MSR from Hungnam to Yudam-ni

Soon the eyes of the world would be fixed on maps of the narrow, winding 78-mile stretch of dirt and gravel road leading from the supply

port of Hungnam to the forlorn village of Yudam-ni at the western tip of the Chosin Reservoir. Distances in road miles between points along the route are as follows:

Hungnam to Hamhung	8
Hamhung to Oro-ri	8
Oro-ri to Majon-dong	14
Majon-dong to Sudong	7
Sudong to Chinhung-ni	6
Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri	10
Koto-ri to Hagaru	11
Hagaru to Yudam-ni	14

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The first half of the distance—the 43 miles from Hungnam to Chinhung-ni—is traversed by a two-lane road passing through comparatively level terrain. Rolling country is encountered north of Majon-dong, but it is at Chinhung-ni that the road makes its abrupt climb into a tumbled region of mile-high peaks. There are few straight or level stretches all the rest of the 35 miles to Yudam-ni, but the route from Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri is the most difficult.

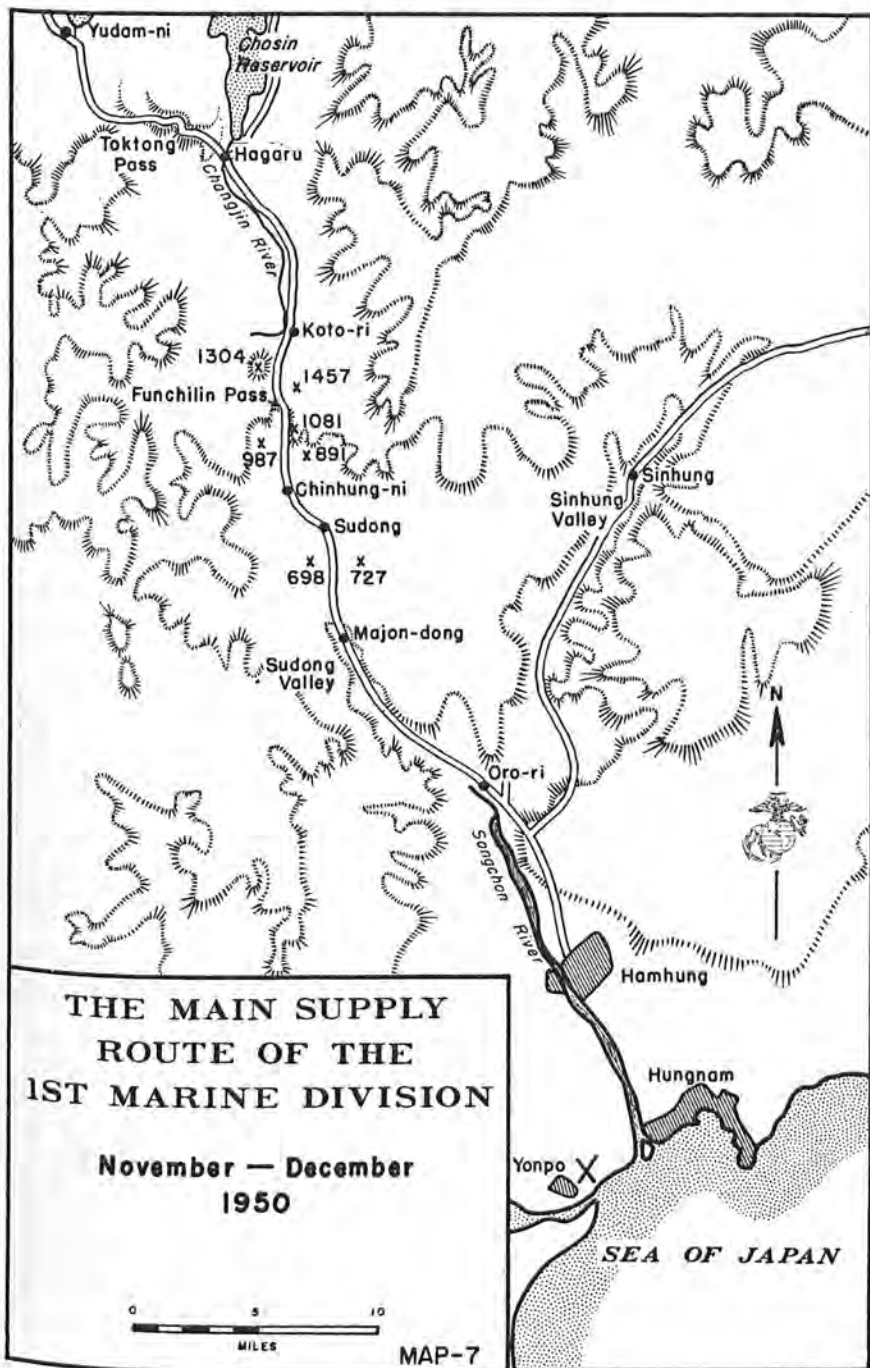
Funchilin Pass, comprising eight of these ten miles, represents an ascent of 2500 feet for a straining jeep or truck. The road is merely a twisting, one-way shelf, with a cliff on one side and a chasm on the other.

About two miles south of Koto-ri the trail reaches a rugged plateau region. There it rejoins the railway along the Changjin River, though the narrow-gauge line was operative only from Hamhung to Chinhung-ni.

Hagaru, at the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir, with highways branching off on both sides of that body of water, was an important communications center before the war. And even though many buildings had been flattened by bombing, the town was still impressive as compared to such wretched mountain hamlets as Koto-ri and Chinhung-ri.

The road from Hagaru to Yudam-ni climbs from the tableland at the foot of the Chosin Reservoir and winds its way up to 4000-foot Tok-tong Pass. Descending through gloomy gorges, it finally reaches a broad valley leading to Yudam-ni, where roads branch off to the north, west, and south from a western arm of the Reservoir.

This was the 78-mile main supply route that would soon be claim-



ing its page in history. In only a few weeks it would be known to thousands of Marines as *the* MSR, as if there never had been another.

Officers and NCOs of the 7th Marines, which was fated to be the first United States unit to defeat the Chinese Communists in battle, were given a verbal preview of the MSR and the part it might play in their future. This was as the result of a flight of inspection made by Major Henry J. Woessner on 30 October, following a briefing at the X Corps CP in Wonsan. The S-3 of the 7th Marines was fortunate enough to arrive just in time to hear the briefing given General Barr by General Almond. Pointing to the map, the X Corps commander indicated that the 7th Infantry Division would push northward to Hyesanjin on the Yalu. Meanwhile the Marines were to head for the border by way of Chinhung-ni, Koto-ri and Hagaru while the 3d Infantry Division took over responsibility for the rear area.

"When we have cleared all this out," concluded General Almond, pointing again to the map, "the ROKs will take over, and we will pull our divisions out of Korea."¹

At the X Corps CP, Woessner met a U. S. Army liaison officer just returned from the 26th ROK Regiment with a report of that unit's encounter with Chinese Communists. The ROKs had been north of Sudong when they collided with the new enemy and were pushed back, after taking 16 prisoners.

Colonel Edward H. Forney, ranking Marine officer on the X Corps staff, arranged for Major Woessner to make a reconnaissance flight over the Hamhung-Hagaru route in an Air Force T-6. The S-3 saw no sign of enemy troop movements all the way to the northern end of the Chosin Reservoir, but he did not fail to note the formidable character of the terrain through which the new MSR passed.

When he returned that evening with his report, Colonel Litzenberg called a meeting of officers and NCOs at the regimental CP. In an informal talk, he told them that they might soon be taking part in the opening engagement of World War III.

"We can expect to meet Chinese Communist troops," he concluded, "and it is important that we win the first battle. The results of that action will reverberate around the world, and we want to make sure that the outcome has an adverse effect in Moscow as well as Peiping."²

¹ Descriptions of the briefing session and reconnaissance flight are based on LtCol H. J. Woessner Comments, 13 Nov 56.

² Litzenberg Comments, 19 Jul 56; Woessner Comments, 13 Nov 56; Maj M. E. Roach Comments, 17 May 56. The quotation is from Litzenberg.

ROKs Relieved by 7th Marines

On 1 November the 7th Marines trucked out of Hamhung to an assembly area midway between Oro-ri and Majon-dong. Moving into position behind the 26th ROK Regiment without incident, Colonel Litzenberg ordered a reconnaissance which took Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis' 1st Battalion about four miles northward to the South Korean positions above Majon-dong. Late that afternoon the regiment secured for the night in a tight perimeter.³

Attached to the regiment were the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines (Major Francis F. Parry); Division Reconnaissance Company (First Lieutenant Ralph B. Crossman); Company D, 1st Engineer Battalion (Captain Byron C. Turner); 1st Motor Transport Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Olin L. Beall; Company E, 1st Medical Battalion (Lieutenant Commander Charles K. Holloway); and detachments from the 1st Signal Battalion, 1st Service Battalion, and Division Military Police Company.⁴

Intelligence based on the questioning of the 16 prisoners taken by the ROKs had revealed that they had been attacked by elements of the 370th Regiment of the 124th CCF Division. Along with the 125th and 126th, the other two divisions of the 42d CCF Army, the 124th had crossed the Yalu during the period 14–20 October. After marching southeast via Kanggye and Changjin, the unit deployed for the defense of the Chosin Reservoir power complex while the 126th pushed eastward to the Fusen Reservoir and the 125th protected the right flank of the 42d CCF Army.⁵

X Corps G-2 officers concluded that these CCF forces were "probably flank security" for the enemy's 4th Army Group across the peninsula in the EUSAK zone.⁶ The G-2 section of the 1st Marine Division arrived at this interpretation:

The capture by the 26th ROK Regt. of 16 POWs identified as being members of the 124th CCF Division . . . would seem to indicate that the CCF has decided to intervene in the Korean War. It would indicate, also, that this reinforcement is being effected by unit rather than by piecemeal replacement from volunteer cadres. However, until more definite information is obtained it must be presumed that the CCF has not yet decided on full scale intervention.⁷

Division intelligence officers concluded their analysis with the com-

³ 7thMar SAR, 5, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. Col R. G. Davis Comments, n. d.

⁵ 1stMarDiv PIR 6. Wilson-Graeber interv, 20 Oct 55.

⁶ X Corps W'D Sum, Nov 50, 24.

⁷ 1stMarDiv PIR 6.

ment, "The advantage to be gained by all-out intervention, at a time when the NK forces are on the verge of complete collapse, is not readily apparent."⁸

There was little activity in the valley on 31 October and 1 November. The ROKs, upon learning that they would be relieved shortly by the 7th Marines, withdrew from advance positions near Sudong to a valley junction about four miles south of that town. Here, at 0600 on 2 November, they were hit by an enemy "counterattack" which, since it was of about two-platoon strength and of only 30 minutes duration, amounted really to a CCF combat patrol action.⁹

Shortly after this clash, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis' 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, moved out of the regimental assembly area and marched toward the ROK lines at Majon-dong in route column. Major Webb D. Sawyer's 2d Battalion followed at an interval of 500 yards, while overhead the Corsairs of VMF-312 orbited on station for reconnaissance and close air support missions.¹⁰

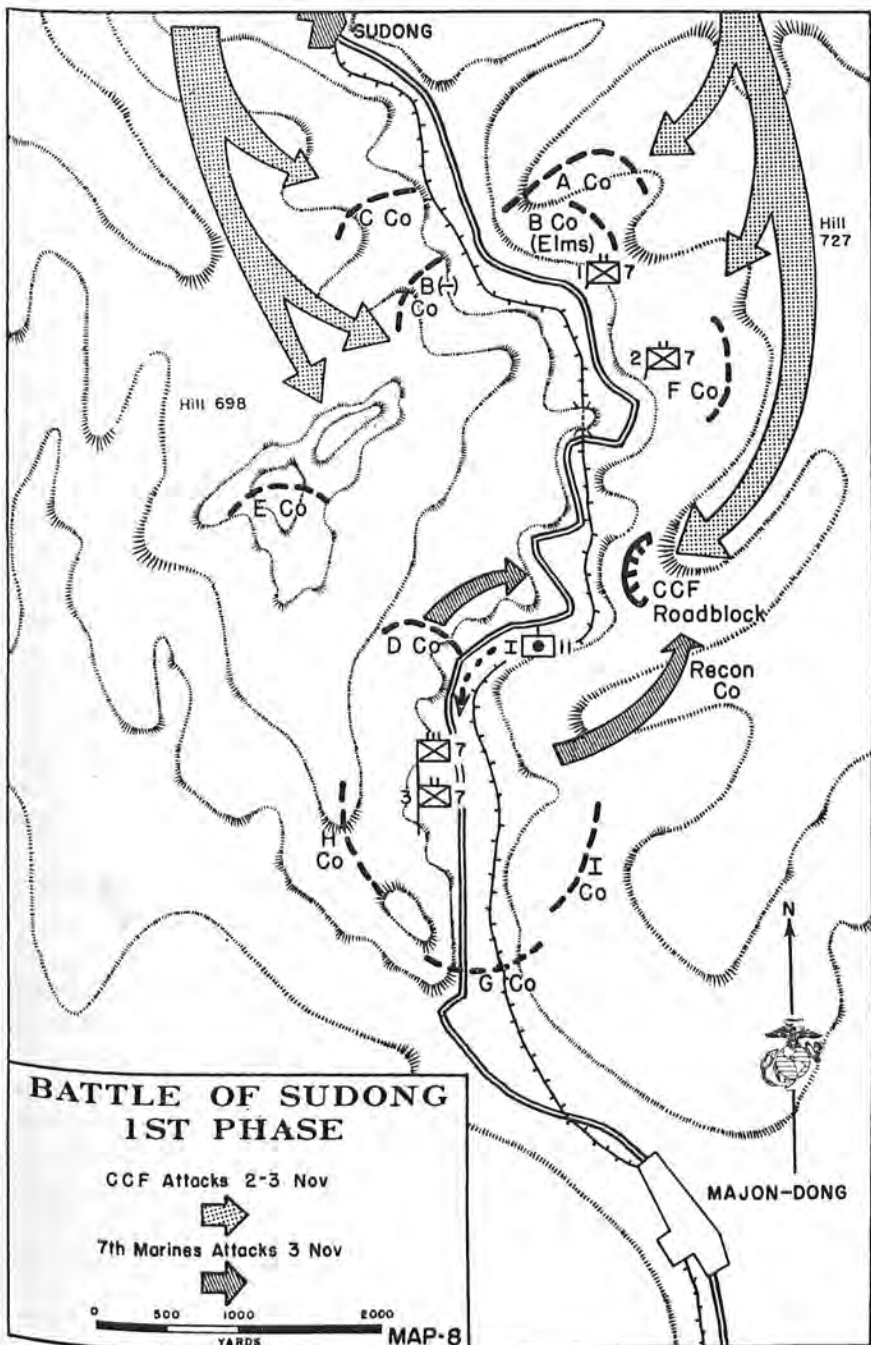
The passage of lines proceeded smoothly and quietly, save for the drone of aircraft as they probed the reaches of the valley. It was over by 1030. Thereafter, progress to the front was slow and watchful. Led by Company A, under Captain David W. Banks, the 1st Battalion took ineffectual long-range CCF fire with only a few casualties. Batteries G and H of 3/11 displaced forward during the morning, and at noon Battery I opened up with the first of 26 missions fired by the artillery battalion that day.

Though second in the tactical column, 2/7 was responsible for high ground on both sides of the MSR, dominated on the left by Hill 698. Company D ascended the eastern slopes early in the afternoon to relieve a ROK unit that apparently had been unable to hold the crest. When the South Koreans saw the Marines approaching, they promptly aban-

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ 1stMarDiv PIRS 7 & 8; Wilson-Graeber interv, 20 Oct 55.

¹⁰ The account of 2 Nov, unless otherwise noted, is derived from: 1stMarDiv SAR, annex SS, appendix 3 (hereafter 3/11 SAR), 3; G-3 SAR, 16; 7thMar SAR, 12; VMF-312 SAR, 8-9; VMF(N)-313 SAR, sec 6, 10; Col H. L. Litzenberg interv by HistDiv HQMC, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51; LtCol F. F. Parry interv by HistDiv HQMC, 4 Apr 51; Caps D. C. Holland, J. G. Theros, and H. G. Connell interv by HistBr G-3 HQMC, n. d.; W. J. Davis interv, 18 Oct 55; 1stLt W. F. Goggin interv by HistDiv HQMC, n. d.; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1157 2 Nov 50; MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 19 Jul 56; Col A. L. Bowser Comments, n. d.; LtCol M. A. Hull Comments, n. d.; Woessner Comments, 13 Nov 56; Capt W. J. Davis Comments, 15 Apr 56; Bey Comments, 24 Apr 51.



doned their position about midway up the slope and headed for the rear.

Dog Company continued up the exposed hillside. Scattered enemy shots from the top of the ridge gradually merged into a pattern of light resistance as the Marines climbed higher. Captain Milton A. Hull ordered his troops to halt, deployed his machine guns for return fire, and radioed for an air strike. Within a few minutes a flight of Corsairs swept down and worked over the ridgeline.

Hull's only assault route traversed a barren area about 50 yards from the crest. His two assault platoons, fully exposed to the enemy's observation, inched upward by fire and movement, taking casualties, and finally reached the top. Their foothold on the ridgeline did not discourage the Red Chinese, who continued to pour fire from skillfully camouflaged positions. To prevent continued attrition among his now exhausted troops (by this time they had climbed some 1600 vertical feet from ground level over an average gradient of 25 per cent), Hull recalled the two platoons to the eastern slopes and radioed for supporting fire.

This fire was not forthcoming. Company D held a line near the summit until about 2200 when Easy Company passed through to occupy a small plateau about 150 yards below the crest for the night.

Meanwhile, down in the valley, Litzenberg's "walking perimeter" completed a 1300-yard advance by 1630. Owing to the nature of the terrain, with the attendant 360-degree vulnerability, the regimental commander stipulated that the 7th Marines' column extend not less than 4000 (the minimum distance which would allow for close-in artillery support) nor more than 6000 yards in length. This allowed sufficient depth for over-all protection, with no loss of mutual support among the three infantry battalions.

Enemy resistance had flared up now and then in the course of the day, but Marine supporting arms so ruled the valley that no serious challenge by the Chinese developed. VMF-312 flew 12 close support missions in the Sudong area, and VMF(N)-513 assisted with several more. The whole precipitous skyline on either side of the regiment was blasted with 500-pound bombs, 20mm shells, and high-velocity rockets.

By way of reply to the heavy shelling and bombing, Chinese mortars and at least one small artillery piece began to fire sporadically as the day wore on. A 120mm mortar round struck 1/7's CP at 1700 and wounded three men.

CCF Counterattack at Sudong

Although the unit commanders of the 7th Marines anticipated more fighting with the new enemy, they probably did not suspect what the night held in store when the regiment dug in at dusk on 2 November. They did not know that the 371st Regiment, 124th CCF Division, was massed to the north and west, nor that the 370th Regiment occupied high ground east of the MSR in strength—both units within easy striking distance of Litzenberg's perimeter. The 372d Regiment, in reserve, stood poised in its hidden encampment several miles to the rear.¹¹

Leading elements of the 7th Marines deployed defensively less than a mile south of Sudong (see Map 8). To the right of the MSR, Able Company's 3d, 2d, and 1st Platoons, in that order, formed a line which extended across Hill 532 and part way up a spur of massive Hill 727, then bent rearward sharply to refuse the east flank. Emplaced along the road in anti-mechanized defense was the company's 3.5-inch rocket squad. The 60mm mortar section and company CP set up in the low ground behind the spur, but Captain Banks himself decided to spend the night in an OP with his rifle platoons.

Lieutenant Colonel Davis of 1/7 deployed Charlie Company (-) across the MSR from Able, on the northeast slopes of Hill 698.¹² To the rear, headquarters and one platoon of Company B dug in on an arm of the same hill, while the other two platoons went into position on the lower reaches of Hill 727 behind Company A. One platoon of Charlie Company, Davis' CP and the battalion 81mm mortars were located in low ground behind Able Company and the elements of Baker on the right of the road.

South of 1/7 lay Major Sawyer's 2d Battalion with Company D at the foot of Hill 698, E on its crest and slopes, and F spread along the steep incline of 727. Sawyer's CP and elements of the 7th Marines' Anti-tank and 4.2-inch Mortar Companies were situated in a shallow meadow

¹¹ This section, unless otherwise noted, is derived from: G-3 SAR, 18-19; 7thMar SAR, 13, n. p.; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; 3/11 SAR, 3; 1stMarDiv PIRs 9 & 10; Litzenberg interv 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51; Parry interv, 4 Apr 51; Holland-Theros-Connell interv, n. d.; Wilson-Graeber interv, 20 Oct 55; Earney-Harris-Mooney interv, 20 Oct 55; Geer, *The New Breed*, 228-235; Capt William J. Davis, "Nightmare Alley," *Leatherneck Magazine*, MS.; Narrative of SSgt R. E. McDurmin, 23 Jul 56; Col R. G. Davis Comments, n. d.; W. J. Davis Comments, 15 Apr 56; Maj W. E. Shea Comments, 30 Apr 56; LtCol W. D. Sawyer Comments, n. d.

¹² Due to 2/7's difficulties on Hill 698 Charlie Company was unable to move position until dusk. As Col Davis has pointed out, this was fortuitous because it allowed Charlie to move into position unseen by the Chinese and was a major factor in trapping the Chinese in the valley the next morning. R. G. Davis Comments, 3.

along the road beneath the Fox Company positions. Several hundred yards to the rear, south of a sharp bend in the road, Major Maurice E. Roach's 3d Battalion deployed in what was in effect a second perimeter protecting the regimental train, 3/11, and Litzenberg's CP on the valley floor. Tying in at the MSR, Companies H and I occupied ridges on the left and right of the road respectively, while G(-) arched through the low ground as the southernmost element of the regiment. Colonel Litzenberg was concerned about the valley which joined the Sudong Valley below Oro-ri lest it contain Chinese. He had Major Roach make a helicopter reconnaissance during the afternoon. Roach sighted nothing.¹³

Except for the occasional thump of an incoming mortar round, night settled on the valley and the Marine perimeter with deceptive quiet. Deceptive, since at Sudong two CCF battalions were poised to smash at the 7th Marines with a well-coordinated double envelopment.

At 2300, Davis' 1st Battalion reported itself under attack from the right flank, the enemy apparently descending the higher slopes of Hill 727. This announcement was somewhat premature, as the Marines of Company A were merely experiencing the infiltration and probing that precede almost every Communist assault. At 2400, 2/7 reported two enemy battalions on the left flank.¹⁴ During the first hour of 3 November, sobering messages were received from Litzenberg's northernmost units. What had begun at 2300 as a staccato of small-arms fire swelled in volume by imperceptible degrees until Hills 698 and 727 were engulfed in a ceaseless din. And by 0100 the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 7th Marines bent under the weight of a full-scale attack on both flanks.

Avoiding the obvious approach through the corridor leading south from Sudong, the commander of the 371st CCF Regiment had dispatched a battalion along each of the ridgelines bordering the valley. Bursting flares and bugle calls signaled when the two assault units came abreast of the Marine positions on the lower reaches of Hills 727 and 698. Then, treading swiftly and silently in their rubber sneakers, the Chinese infantrymen swept down obliquely and struck Able and Fox Companies on the east and Baker on the west. Charlie on the slopes of Hill 698 was undisturbed. Where the Chinese met resistance,

¹³ LtCol M. E. Roach Comments, 7 May 56.

¹⁴ 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0721 3 Nov 50. Since neither D nor F Companies was involved at this time, the information must have come from E. Capt Bey, however, doubts if either of the probing attacks received by E Company was made by more than 20 men. Capt R. T. Bey Comments, 24 Apr 56.

they slugged it out at close range with grenades and submachine guns. Where they found gaps, they poured through and raced to the low ground. To the Marines, the specific CCF objectives were not readily apparent in those hectic hours before dawn, for the enemy seemed to be everywhere.¹⁵

Shortly after the battle was joined high on the hillsides, Marines at Able Company's CP heard the clanking sounds of a tracked vehicle on the MSR to the north. When the machine passed the rocket section at the roadblock without incident, they dropped their guards momentarily, believing it to be a friendly bulldozer. The big vehicle rumbled into the CP and stopped, one headlight glaring at exposed mortar crews and headquarters personnel.

"Tank!" shouted Staff Sergeant Donald T. Jones, section chief of Able Company's 60mm mortars.

It was a Russian T-34, one of the five remaining to the 344th North Korean Tank Regiment, supporting the 124th CCF Division. The troops at the roadblock had been caught napping.

A burst of machine-gun fire from the tank sent the lightly armed Marines scurrying for cover. The armored vehicle quickly withdrew to the road and drove farther south, into 1/7's CP. After a short, inquisitive pause, it rumbled toward the 1st Battalion's 81mm mortar positions. The Russian 85mm rifle flashed four times in the darkness, but the shells screamed harmlessly over the mortars and detonated in the high ground beyond.

Rocket launchers of Charlie Company and the recoilless rifles of 7th Marines Antitank Company opened up from positions around 1/7's headquarters. At least one 75mm round struck home, and the belt of sandbags around the T-34's turret began to burn. The tank swung back onto the MSR and headed north. Approaching Able Company's roadblock, through which it had entered the Marine position, it took a hit from the 3.5-inch rocket section. In reply, one 85mm shell at pistol range all but wiped out the Marine antitank crew. The enemy vehicle, trailing flame and sparks, clanked around a bend in the road and disappeared.

Not long after this astounding foray, the fighting on Hills 698 and 727 spread down to the MSR. The 1st and 2d Platoons of Company A, pressed now from three directions and suffering heavy casualties, re-

¹⁵ X Corps PIR 44, annex 2; 1stMarDiv PIR 10; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1530 3 Nov 50; Shea Comments, 30 Apr 51.

tracted to the 3d Platoon positions at the tip of the spur. Some of the men were cut off and forced back on the Baker Company elements east of the MSR. Ultimately, one of the two Company B platoons in this area was driven down to the low ground, and the other forced to fall back. Later they counterattacked and recovered their foxholes.

West of the MSR, the remainder of Company B fought off assaults on its left flank and rear by Chinese who had skirted around Charlie Company's advance positions.¹⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Davis sent the battalion reserve, Lieutenant Graeber's 2d Platoon of Baker, to reinforce the hard pressed left platoon. Attempting to lead his men across the MSR, Graeber found the route effectively blocked by the enemy in the river bed.

Descending now from both sides of the road, enemy infantrymen swarmed over the valley floor. They overran most of the 7th Marines 4.2-inch Mortar Company and captured one of its tubes. They seriously threatened the 1st and 2d Battalion CPs and the AT Company in the same general area. High on the slopes in 2/7's zone, Companies E and F were beset by small bands of infiltrators. And though these two companies held their ground, the Reds found their flanks, slipped behind them, and entrenched at the key road bend separating 2/7 from 3/7 to the south. The principal Marine unit at the sharp curve in the MSR was Battery I, whose position in the low ground became increasingly precarious as the night wore on.

Two Marine Battalions Cut Off

Dawn of 3 November revealed a confused and alarming situation in the valley south of Sudong. Enemy troops shared the low ground with Marine elements between the 1st and 2d Battalion CPs, and they had blown out a section of the MSR in this locale.¹⁷ The 2d Battalion's commander later remarked, "When daylight came, we found that we were in a dickens of a mess. The rifle companies were well up in the hills, and the Chinese were occupying the terrain between the CP and the companies."¹⁸

Between 2/7 and 3/7, a company of Reds had dug in on a finger of high ground overlooking the road bend and Battery I from the east.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ The demolition had little more than dramatic effect, however, since the Songchon river bed was negotiable to vehicles of all types.

¹⁸ Sawyer Comments.

Scattered Chinese forces roamed Hills 698 and 727 almost at will. On the latter height, elements of the 371st CCF Regiment had been reinforced by a battalion of the 370th, so that pressure against the right flank of 1/7 and 2/7 continued long after daybreak.¹⁹

With his lead battalions thrown back on the defensive, Colonel Litzenberg relied on overwhelming superiority in supporting arms to tip the scales on 3 November and regain the initiative. While the regimental 4.2-inch mortars fired, howitzers of Batteries G and H thundered almost ceaselessly the whole night long from positions within 3/7's perimeter. Battery I, after being extricated from the enemy dominated road bend at 1100 with the help of a platoon of G Company, added its metal to the bombardment. In the course of the day, the 18 field pieces of the battalion fired a total of 1431 rounds in 49 missions.²⁰

VMF-312 provided constant air cover after first light. Its planes not only scoured enemy assault troops left exposed on the ridges, but also searched out and attacked CCF artillery positions and vehicles. This squadron alone flew 18 close support missions on 3 November, the alternating flights being led by Major Daniel H. Davis, Captain Harry G. C. Henneberger, Captain George E. McClane, and First Lieutenant Shelby M. Forrest.²¹ VMF(N)-513 dispatched a flight of night fighters to Sudong at 0910 under Major Robert L. Cochran. After raking enemy troops with 1500 rounds from their 20mm cannon, Cochran and his three pilots unloaded three general purpose and fragmentation bombs along with 15 high-velocity rockets.²²

As much supporting fire fell within the 7th Regiment's perimeter as outside. Since the crack of dawn it had been the principal mission of the advance Marine elements to eject scores of Chinese troops, individuals and small bands, who were scattered along the hillsides and valley floor within the zones of the 1st and 2d Battalions. While accomplishing this task, the Marines established a tactical principle for coming weeks: that to nullify Chinese night tactics, regardless of large-scale penetrations and infiltration, defending units had only to maintain position until daybreak. With observation restored, Marine firepower invariably would melt down the Chinese mass to impotency.

This was the case on 3 November, although the melting down process

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; X Corps PIR 44, annex 2; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0721 3 Nov 50; 7thMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1315 3 Nov 50; and Geer, *The New Breed*, 235-236.

²⁰ 3/11 SAR, 3; Maj W. R. Earney Comments, n. d.

²¹ VMF-312 SAR, 12.

²² VMF(N)-513 SAR, 11. The others on this flight were Capt Edwin Pendry, 1stLt Warren J. Beyes, and 1stLt William E. Jennings.

was a savage, all-day affair. With the help of air, artillery, and mortars, the 1st Battalion cleared the low ground by midmorning and restored its right flank later in the day. The Chinese in the valley were crushed, the main group being annihilated by the heavy machine guns of Weapons Company as they attempted to march northward along the railroad in column at daylight. Counted enemy dead in 1/7's zone alone amounted to 662.²³

The main effort in the 2d Battalion's zone was aimed at the CCF concentration on the spur of Hill 727 overlooking the bend in the MSR. Owing to this barrier, Litzenberg had to call for an airdrop of supplies to sustain his leading elements on 3 November.²⁴ Major Sawyer ordered Company D, on the base of Hill 698 to the south of the roadblock, to move up the valley, cross the river, and clean out the spur at Hill 727. Finding the low ground blocked by heavy fire, Captain Hull circled to the left along the incline of Hill 698, intending to come abreast of the Chinese strong point before striking at it across the MSR.²⁵

Meanwhile, Captain Walter D. Phillips' Easy Company, perched on the side of Hill 698, struggled to secure the peak of that hill mass. A rush by First Lieutenant John Yancey's 2d Platoon at about 0800 secured a small plateau about 50 yards below the crest against the opposition of one Chinese soldier. First Lieutenant Robert T. Bey's 3d Platoon then passed through and frontally assaulted the peak only to be thrown back by what Bey calls "the most concentrated grenade barrage this writer has had the dubious distinction to witness." Following an air strike at about 1400 Easy Company secured the crest with its 40 Chinese dead.²⁶

With all of the rifle companies involved in fire fights or security missions, Litzenberg resorted to supporting arms and headquarters troops to knock out the roadblock. From his regimental CP he dispatched First Lieutenant Earl R. Delong, Executive Officer of the AT Company, with a reserve 75mm recoilless rifle and a makeshift crew. Delong moved into position opposite the strong point at a range of 500 yards, while air and artillery hammered the enemy positions.²⁷

²³ Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 27; 7thMar SAR, 13; R. G. Davis Comments, 7-9; Vorhies Comments.

²⁴ 7thMar SAR, 13; Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51.

²⁵ Goggin interv; Hull Comments.

²⁶ Bey Comments, 24 Apr 56.

²⁷ 7thMar msg to CG 1st MarDiv, 2125 3 Nov 50; and Capt E. R. Delong interv, 18 Oct 50.

Simultaneously, the Division Reconnaissance Company ascended the high ground east of the MSR in the vicinity of Litzenberg's headquarters, then advanced northward along the ridge to envelop the roadblock. This unit, just returned from an active, overnight patrol to Huksu-ri, moved into a hillside position and took the rear of the Chinese under fire across an intervening gully.²⁸

Delong's 75 had begun firing high explosive and white phosphorus into the enemy's front; and Company D, after cleaning up the scattered resistance on the slopes of Hill 698, closed on the roadblock under cover of two air strikes and prepared to assault. The Chinese, obviously shaken by the pounding of supporting arms, had commenced a withdrawal into the hills east of the roadbend when Hull's men began their assault. From Recon Company's positions, Lieutenant Crossman called for air and artillery to catch the retreating Reds in the open. But the request was turned down because Dog Company troops were already filtering through the objective area. By 1810 the roadblock was eliminated, although Dog Company had to withstand two counterattacks before its hold on the spur was secure. The Chinese had left behind 28 dead, strewn among the boulders and recesses of a natural redoubt.²⁹

The main enemy encroachments having been smashed, the 7th Marines' MSR was again clear for traffic, save for long-range harassment by an occasional CCF rifleman hidden in the hills. At dusk, trucks streamed northward from the regimental CP to deliver supplies to the 1st and 2d Battalions and to evacuate about 100 battle casualties from those units. The wounded were rushed to the Division Hospital and the 121st Army Evacuation Hospital in Hungnam.³⁰

End of NKPA Tank Regiment

The coming of darkness on 3 November marked the finish of the first phase. Litzenberg's perimeter remained essentially the same as on the previous day, the only changes being Company D's occupation of the

²⁸ 1stMarDiv SAR, EE (hereafter HqBn SAR), 10; HqBn URpt 8, 2-3; Crossman-Puckett-Sharon interv, 20 Oct 55.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Goggin interv; Delong interv, 18 Oct 50; and 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 2125 3 Nov 50; Hull Comments.

³⁰ 7thMar SAR, appendix 4, 4; ADC 1stMarDiv tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1320 3 Nov 50; and Delong interv, 18 Oct 50. Casualty figures could only be estimated in after action reports, since all 7th Marines' records were destroyed before the withdrawal from Yudam-ni in early December 1950. Throughout the remainder of this volume, only those casualty figures for the Division as a whole can be reported with consistent accuracy.

high ground east of the road bend, Recon Company's assumption of local security at the regimental CP, and 3/11's tighter concentration within the zone of 3/7. What few light contacts occurred during the night were decided quickly by Marine artillery and mortars.³¹

Later intelligence evaluations proved that these contacts could have involved only CCF patrols or stragglers, for it was in this same period that the 370th and 371st CCF Regiments withdrew some three miles from Sudong to a defense line established by elements of the 372d Regiment north of Chinhung-ni. The two assault units had paid a high price for failure during the 2-4 November fighting. The 371st Regiment lost the equivalent of five companies out of its 1st and 3d Battalions, with the total dead estimated at 793. And the 3d Battalion, 370th Regiment, was reduced by the destruction of two companies.³²

It was a wobbly 124th CCF Division, then, that dug in with heavy machine guns and mortars on two massive hills, 987 and 891, flanking the MSR about two miles north of Chinhung-ni. The depleted 344th NKPA Tank Regiment could not avail itself of such defensible terrain, for until Marine engineers widened the tortuous cliff road through Funchilin Pass it would not accommodate armor.³³

Apparently the Chinese Communists had left their North Korean comrades of the 344th to fend for themselves. The NKPA unit had already dwindled considerably from its original organization of three armored and three infantry companies. On 2 November it comprised only five T-34s and their crews. One of these machines, after being damaged during the single-handed raid on the 7th Marines' perimeter that night, was abandoned the next day. The NKPA crews put the remaining four vehicles into camouflaged positions next to the MSR at Chinhung-ni, where they waited resignedly at a tactical dead-end.³⁴

Colonel Litzenberg was aware of the probability of further resistance along the road, since on 3 November Marine air had reported approximately 300 enemy trucks—in groups of 15 or 20—on the move south of the Chosin Reservoir.³⁵ At dawn of 4 November, after a night of relative calm around the old perimeter, he ordered his subordinates to conduct vigorous patrolling preparatory to continuing the advance.³⁶

³¹ 7thMar SAR, 14; 3/11 SAR, 3; Goggin interv; HqBn URpt 8, 2-3; 7th Mar msgs to CG 1stMarDiv, 0804 and 1508 4 Nov 50.

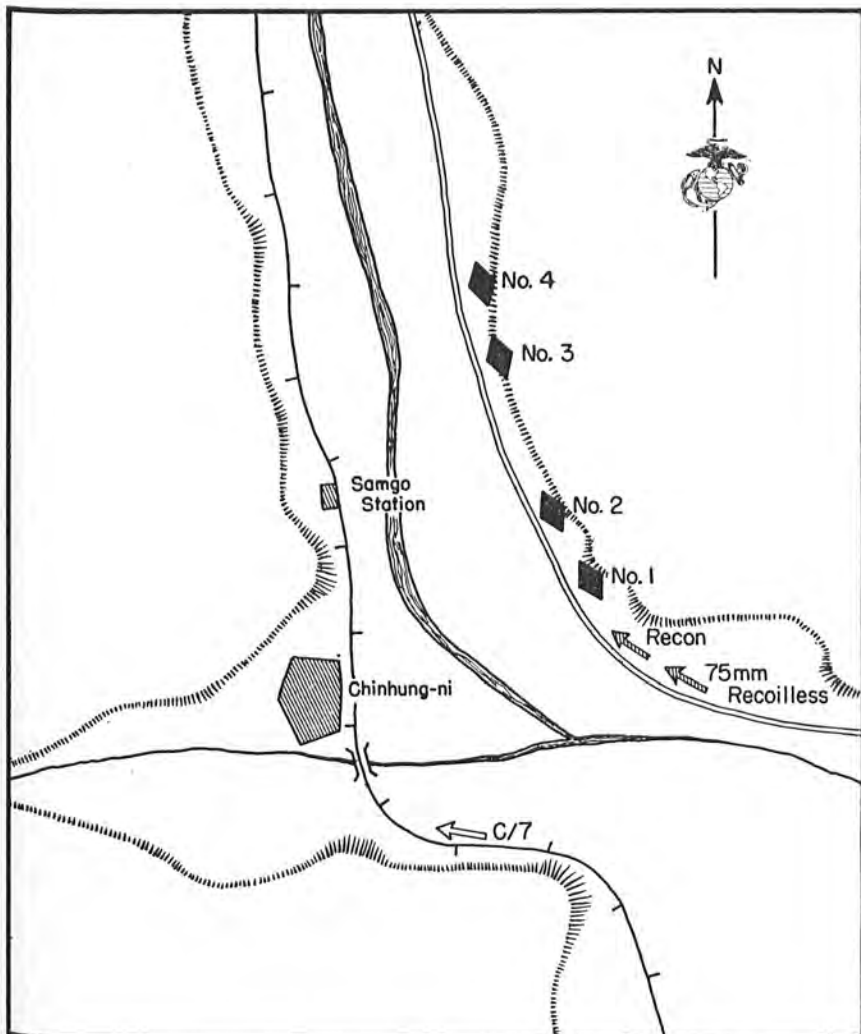
³² X Corps PIR 44, annex 2; 1stMarDiv PIRs 11 and 12, encl 1; 7thMar SAR, n. p.

³³ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex NN (hereafter 1stEngrBn SAR), 8; and 7thMar SAR, n. p.

³⁴ G-2 SAR, 34; and 7thMar SAR, n. p.

³⁵ 1stMarDiv PIR 10.

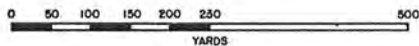
³⁶ CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1508 4 Nov 50.



CHIHUNG-NI TANK FIGHT

4 November

◆ • • • NKPA Tanks



MAP-9

Troops of 1/7 moved forward in the early light and scouted the valley as far north as the edge of Sudong. They met no opposition and returned to the perimeter. Litzenberg then formed the 7th Marines in column, with the Reconnaissance Company in the lead, followed by 1/7 and 3/7 in that order. He left the 2d Battalion in position on Hills 698 and 727 to protect the regimental flanks.³⁷

Recon Company moved out in jeeps at 0800, First Lieutenant Ernest C. Hargett's 1st Platoon in the point. Entering Sudong a short time later, the vanguard rounded a bend in the middle of town and surprised a group of CCF soldiers. In a 30-minute fight, Hargett's men killed three and captured about 20. The 2d and 3d Platoons of the Reconnaissance Company meanwhile inspected the high ground above Sudong without opposition.

Lieutenant Crossman reorganized his company in column on the road and set out for Chinhung-ni with Second Lieutenant Donald W. Sharon's 2d Platoon in the lead. About the same time, 1000, the 1st Battalion moved out of the 7th Marines' perimeter south of Sudong and traced Crossman's route through the low ground.

At Chinhung-ni the highway runs along the east side of the river while the railroad traces the west side. The narrow-gauge track enters the village over a bridge spanning a branch stream. Just beyond is Samgo station, which served as a railhead for the cable-car system of Funchilin Pass. As the Reconnaissance Company approached Chinhung-ni on 4 November, a small group of Chinese soldiers milled around the train cars and buildings of Samgo Station. They probably had some tactical connection with the four T-34 tanks camouflaged opposite them across the river and road; but the two forces seemed oblivious not only of each other but also of the Marines bearing down on them.

Lieutenant Sharon's platoon advanced rapidly from Sudong at 1400, followed closely by the rest of the Reconnaissance Company and a section of 75mm recoilless rifles. About 2000 yards south of Chinhung-ni they halted on sighting fresh tank tracks but quickly moved out again on orders of Lieutenant Colonel Davis. At the highway entrance to Chinhung-ni, Sharon's troops unknowingly passed the first T-34, hidden on the right of the road. Coming abreast of the second

³⁷ The advance to Chinhung-ni and the engagement with enemy tanks is derived from: 7thMar SAR, 13; Crossman-Puckett-Sharon interv, 20 Oct 55; Geer, *The New Breed*, 236-237; and P. G. Martin ltr to HistBr G-3 HQMC, 21 Oct 55; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0045, 5 Nov 50; R. G. Davis Comments, 13-15; Maj R. B. Crossman Comments, n. d.; Shea Comments, 30 Apr 56.

Communist tank, which also remained undetected for the moment, the Marines spotted the Chinese soldiers across the river at Samgo Station and opened fire.

The CCF infantrymen scattered under the hail of small-arms fire and many of them were cut down. This was fortunate for Company C of 1/7, which was marching along the railroad tracks and just then nearing the bridge south of the station, where it could have been taken under enfilade fire by the enemy soldiers and tanks.

It was during the exchange with the Chinese that Sharon and his men spotted the second North Korean tank under a pile of brush on the right of the road. The platoon leader, accompanied by Staff Sergeant Richard B. Twohey and Corporal Joseph E. McDermott, climbed upon the dormant vehicle. Suddenly the periscope began to revolve. McDermott smashed the glass and Twohey dropped in a grenade. With Sharon they jumped to the ground just as the grenade exploded inside the machine.

The tank engine roared and the vehicle lurched toward the three Marines. Twohey jumped on it again and dropped another grenade down the periscope. After the dull thump of the second explosion, the T-34 stopped dead and began smoking.

By this time Staff Sergeant William L. Vick's 75mm recoilless gun section and 3.5-inch rocket crews of Company C had moved up. Together they gave the *coup de grace* to the damaged T-34. Simultaneously, Sharon's men saw a thatched hut farther down the road disintegrate as tank number three emerged, its 85mm rifle swinging menacingly toward the valley crowded with Marines and vehicles. First Lieutenant Raymond J. Elledge fired his 75s from their carts, and Company C's rocket launchers opened up. The T-34 took hits but rumbled on. Seconds earlier, First Lieutenant Dan C. Holland, Forward Air Controller for 1/7, had radioed overhead Corsairs for assistance. One of the gull-winged planes plummeted out of formation and unleashed a pair of five-inch rockets. They were direct hits. The T-34 blew up and died on the road.³⁸

Sharon and his men moved forward cautiously. While passing the blazing hulk, they spotted enemy tank Number Four, camouflaged against a hillside just ahead. At almost the same moment, Marines passing Chinhung-ni stumbled upon docile tank Number One in the

³⁸ Available records do not indicate whether tank number three should be credited to VMF-312 or to VMF(N)-513, both of which had close-support flights in the area.

midst of their formation. Recoiless rifles and rocket launchers blasted the machine, and its crew climbed out and surrendered. Sharon then led the antitank crews through the river bed toward the fourth T-34. The Communist tankmen, entrenched on the slope behind their empty vehicle, gave up without a fight. The tank itself was knocked out by 3.5-inch rockets and 75mm shells; and the 344th NKPA Tank Regiment ceased to exist.

The Fight for How Hill

After the destruction of enemy armor, Colonel Litzenberg began deploying the 7th Marines in perimeter around the valley junction at Chinhung-ni. The advance had netted about 6000 yards by midafternoon, and the remaining daylight was needed to bring all elements forward and consolidate the newly won ground.³⁹

Aware that the Chinese were at the top of Funchilin Pass but not that he was directly under their guns, the regimental commander at 1600 ordered Reconnaissance Company to patrol some 2000 yards into Funchilin Pass and outpost the southern tip of Hill 891. The high ground selected for the outpost coincided with the eastern half of the Chinese forward line, and it would later be remembered as "How Hill" in honor of Company H of 3/7.⁴⁰

As 1/7 dug in on the heights flanking Chinhung-ni, Recon Company, with Second Lieutenant Charles R. Puckett's 3d Platoon leading, advanced in motorized column about a mile into the pass. At this point, Hill 987 looms up on the west and the highway veers sharply to the east for approximately 1000 yards. After a hairpin turn, the road climbs on a parallel line almost to its starting point, then resumes its northerly course, clinging to the rocky wall of Hill 891 which rises abruptly from the chasm that separates it from Hill 987.

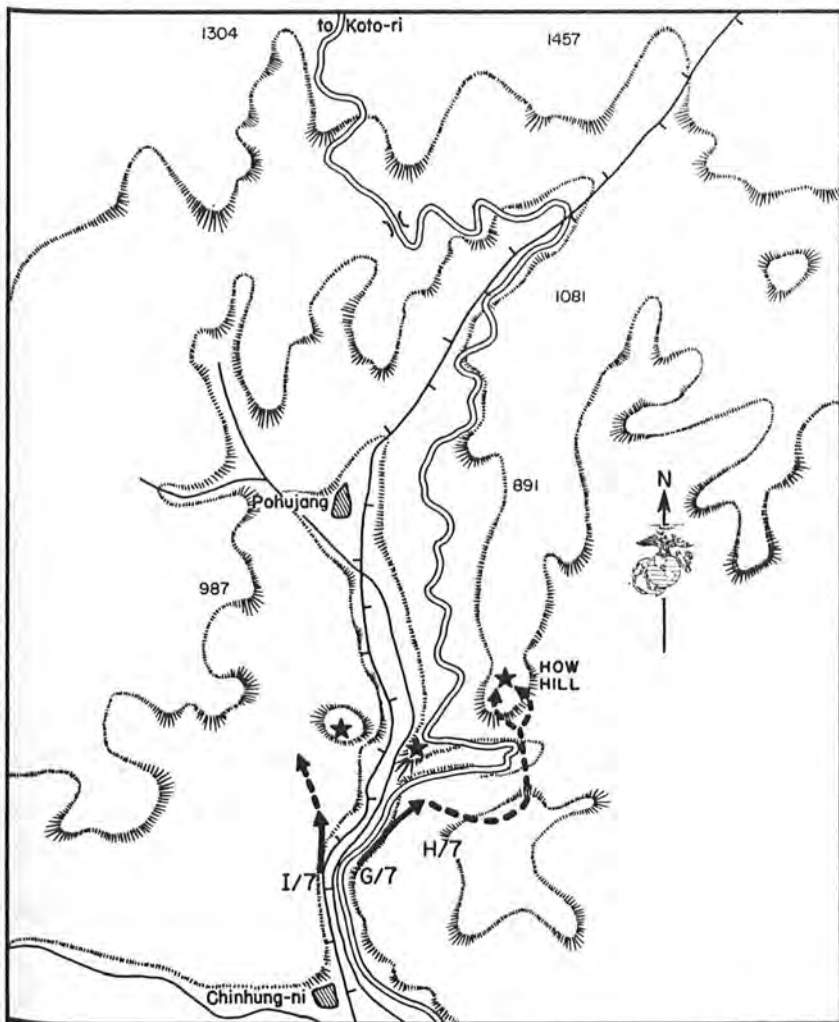
Puckett's platoon had approached the road bend warily, for a sizeable enemy group had been spotted earlier near the base of Hill 987 across the gorge. At 1630 the first two jeeps of the column eased around the curve and immediately came under fire from Hill 987 to the left, 891 to the front, and from a CCF patrol to the right, on the road itself.⁴¹

For 45 minutes Puckett and his men were pinned to the road and hill-

³⁹ 7thMar SAR, 13; and 1stMarDiv POR 116.

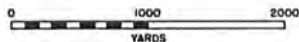
⁴⁰ 7thMar SAR, n. p.; and Crossman-Puckett-Sharon interv, 20 Oct 55; Dowsett Comments, 29 May 56.

⁴¹ HqBn URpt 8, 3; and Crossman-Puckett-Sharon interv, 20 Oct 55.



ACTION OF 4-5 NOVEMBER AND FUNCHILIN PASS

- Advances made 4 November
- - -→ Advances made 5 November
- ★ CCF Strongpoints



MAP-10

side, and only darkness and a strike by Marine air finally enabled the whole column to withdraw to the 7th Marines' lines. The clash cost Recon two killed and five wounded, and heavy machine-gun fire had destroyed the two lead jeeps.⁴²

During the relatively quiet night of 4–5 November, Colonel Litzenberg issued his order for the next day's advance. The 1st Battalion was to hold the flanks at Chinhung-ni while 3/7, followed at a distance of 500–1000 yards by 2/7, passed through and attacked into Funchilin Pass. Major Parry's 3/11 and the 4.2 Mortar Company were to support the infantry by high-angle fire from positions south of Sudong.⁴³ Resistance could be expected, for even as the 7th Marines peacefully sat out the hours of darkness, the night fighters of VMF(N)-513 were bombing and strafing enemy convoys around the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir.⁴⁴

At 0700 Lieutenant Hargett's 1st Platoon of Recon Company departed Chinhung-ni along the MSR to patrol on the right flank. Reaching the hairpin curve, the platoon was pinned down by enemy fire at exactly the same place where Puckett's unit had come to grief. VMF-312 and 3/11 promptly went into action, and Hargett ultimately withdrew his patrol under the shield of their supporting fire. Marine casualties were four wounded.⁴⁵

Major Roach's 3d Battalion moved out for the attack at 0800, passing through the high-ground positions of 1/7 on either side of Chinhung-ni. Company I advanced toward Hill 987 and G toward 891 (see Map 10). Both units were hit hard by small-arms and machine-gun fire as they came abreast of the road bend; and for the remainder of the day, the "advance was negligible."⁴⁶

From 1000 onward, the second phase of the battle roared to a climax

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ 7thMar SAR, 13; 3/11 SAR, 3.

⁴⁴ VMF(N)-513 SAR, 12.

⁴⁵ HqBn SAR, 12; HqBn URpt 9, 2; Crossman-Puckett-Sharon interv, 20 Oct 55; and Geer, *The New Breed*, 237–238; Litzenberg Comments, 19 Jul 56. This was the last employment of Recon by the 7th Marines. On 7 November it was detached and ordered back to Majon-dong to patrol the road to Huku-si and the division's left flank.

⁴⁶ The fight for Hills 891 and 987 is derived from 7thMar SAR, 13–14; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; 3/11 SAR, 3; VMF-312 SAR, 9; VMF(N)-513 SAR, 13; 1stMarDiv *OpnO* 19–50, 5 Nov 50; Earney-Harris-Mooney interv, 20 Oct 55; W. J. Davis interv, 18 Oct 55; 1stMarDiv *PIRs* 12 & 13; Aide-de-Camp, CG 1stMarDiv tel to G-2 1stMarDiv, 1130 5 Nov 50; 7thMar msgs to CG 1stMarDiv, 1035, 1200, 1330, 1900, 2130, and 2215 5 Nov 50, and 1145, 1245, 1410, 1425, 2055, and 2245 6 Nov 50; 7thMar *ISUM* 14; 1stMarDiv *POR* 122; and Geer, *The New Breed*, 237–240; Capt H. H. Harris Comments, n. d.; Earney Comments, 2–8; Capt M. P. Newton, "The Attack on 'How' Hill," (MS); Roach Comments, 7 May 56.

as a duel between supporting arms. In 26 missions during 5 November, the batteries of 3/11 threw 943 shells into the enemy positions. The Chinese answered with counterbattery fire from their 122mm mortars, but toward the end of the day these weapons were silenced by Marine howitzer barrages. A forward observer with Company G reported an enemy ammunition dump destroyed. This information was later verified by a POW who mentioned the following additional losses in CCF mortars: 10 crewmen killed and 17 wounded, one mortar destroyed, two mortars put out of action, and the dispersal of "most of the remaining personnel."

VMF-312 flew 37 sorties in 90 hours of close support combat on the 5th. Between Chinhung-ni and the Chosin Reservoir, 21 enemy trucks were destroyed. Pilots reported that "the surrounding ridges were filled with enemy troops" and that their strikes against these Chinese were "extremely effective." Led by Major Cochran and Captain Otis W. S. Corman, flights from VMF(N)-513 blasted troops, buildings, supply vehicles, and gun emplacements scattered from Koto-ri at the top of Funchilin Pass to Hagaru at the reservoir. General Smith, during a helicopter visit to Litzenberg's CP, remarked that a "considerable number of planes . . . really worked the place over."⁴⁷

On the ground, the fight ended at dusk with the Chinese retaining their firm grip on these well camouflaged positions studding Hills 891 and 987 despite heavy losses.⁴⁸ Marine casualties were light, for it was the tortuous terrain in conjunction with enemy bullets, not enemy fire alone, that obstructed the attackers. Since General Smith earlier in the day had named Koto-ri as the 7th Marines' immediate objective, Colonel Litzenberg ordered the 3d Battalion to resume the advance at 0800 the next morning.

The night of 5-6 November witnessed only minor contacts around the regimental perimeter. Some 200 Korean laborers accounted for most of the activity during darkness as they carried supplies to forward Marine positions and evacuated casualties to the rear.

Major Roach's plan for 6 November called for How Company, supported by the fire of George, to envelop the southeast slope of Hill 891 while Item continued its attack on Hill 987. At about 0800 First

⁴⁷ Smith, *Chronicle*, 73.

⁴⁸ One Chinese took all the pounding from supporting arms that he could, then climbed out of his bunker and walked into G Company's lines to surrender. On interrogation he pinpointed his regiment: one battalion on Hill 987, one on Hill 891, and the reserve battalion in the saddle between 987 and 1304. Roach Comments, 7 May 56.

Lieutenant Howard H. Harris led How Company out of its reserve position. It took him until nearly 1500 to traverse the rugged landscape and get into position. Meanwhile, Item Company under First Lieutenant William E. Johnson had beaten off one counterattack and edged about 300 yards closer to Hill 987, with its most effective opposition coming from bunkers on a spur overlooking the MSR.

Captain Thomas E. Cooney had been wounded twice the previous day while leading Company G against the trenches and foxholes on the southern tip of Hill 891. Except for a feint by one platoon along the MSR into the hairpin turn, his company spent the day in a long-range fight with the Chinese defenders.

Lieutenant Harris led his men over the high ground behind G into positions to the east. Cooney's experience showed that the only possible approach to Hill 891 was to flank it from the southeast. Although the fresh company arrived sometime after 1400, its attack was held up until about 1600 to await air. Following a strike by two Corsairs, the howitzers of 3/11 and the regimental 4.2 mortars began pounding the Chinese positions.

How Company jumped off at about 1615. Two assault platoons, led by Second Lieutenants Robert D. Reem and Minard P. Newton, descended into the intervening gulley at the tip of the hairpin curve. During a quick reorganization in the low ground, machine guns were posted to cover the ascent. Then the platoons started up towards the enemy-held summit through companion draws, Harris accompanying Newton's outfit on the left.

The powdery soil of the steep slope made climbing difficult and exhausting. About a hundred yards up, Newton's platoon began receiving light fire, followed a few yards farther by a hail of grenades and machine gun slugs. The Marines inched forward and were stopped by the Chinese fire. On the right, meanwhile, Reed climbed against no opposition, so it appeared that the envelopment was working. Unexpectedly, the two draws converged near the top of the hill, with the result that the platoons met.

Lieutenant Harris revised his plans by directing Newton, with his left squad supporting by BAR fire, to lead Reem to the top of the hill. Once there, Newton was to swing right and Reem left to envelop the Chinese positions. Newton worked a squad up onto a nose extending out from the summit. The Chinese replied with a renewed barrage of grenades and counterattacked Newton's left. Sergeant Charlie Foster,

seeing apparent victory turning into defeat, lunged forward to break up the attack. He reached the top and died but the men behind him repulsed the Reds.

During the close fighting on the left, Lieutenant Reem had gathered his squad leaders for instructions preparatory to the final assault on the right. An enemy grenade fell into the midst of the group, and Reem was killed as he smothered the explosion with his body. Staff Sergeant Anthony J. Ricardi took over the platoon.

At about 1800 Harris radioed Roach that his troops were exhausted. Although it was already dusk, he was bringing up his reserve platoon, he said, for the Chinese still held the crest in strength. Company H had taken only eight casualties, but ammunition was low and the approaching darkness prevented the dispatching of more fresh troops. The battalion commander relayed the report to Colonel Litzenberg, who immediately ordered the company to disengage and withdraw. The fighting descent under cover of a 4.2 mortar and artillery bombardment brought Company H back within the lines of 3/7 by 2000 with its six wounded and the body of Lieutenant Reem.

Disappearance of CCF Remnants

Darkness on the night of 6 November descended like a cloak over the 124th CCF Division. In the morning the Chinese had vanished. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, encountered no opposition whatever as it occupied the southern tips of Hills 891 and 987.⁴⁹

The mysterious disappearance of this unit, following the equally strange withdrawal of the Chinese Reds who made the first CCF contacts in the EUSAK zone, aroused no end of speculation. Officers of the 7th Marines believed that enemy losses had been heavy enough for a disabling effect. This opinion was confirmed the following year when a Marine Corps Board visited Korea for a special analytical study of Marine operations of 1950, based on all Army and Marine records available at that time as well as interviews and interrogations. The Board concluded that "the 124th CCF Division was estimated to have been rendered militarily noneffective."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ 7thMar SAR, 14.

⁵⁰ *Marine Corps Board Study* (hereafter *MCB Study*), II-C-16. *CCF Army Histories*, 31, states that the 124th was in action in west central Korea by the middle of November.

Following the enemy's disappearance on the night of 6-7 November, the 7th Marines occupied the southern reaches of Hills 891 and 987 while reconnoitering to the top of 891. The rest of the day and all the next was devoted to consolidating positions along the MSR and sending out patrols in a vain search for the vanished 124th CCF Division.⁵¹

On 8 November, General Almond visited the 7th Marines. Upon hearing of the valor of Captain Cooney at "How Hill," he awarded that officer the Silver Star medal on the spot. There being neither pendant nor citation available, the Corps Commander pinned a slip of paper to Cooney's jacket in the brief ceremony. Scrawled on the fragment was the inscription, "Silver Star Medal for Gallantry in Action—Almond."⁵²

While the 7th Marines advanced astride the MSR, a volunteer patrol of fifteen men, led by First Lieutenant William F. Goggin of 2/7, traced a lonely, circuitous route in the mountains to the west. Having left Chinhung-ni at 1200 on 8 November, the scouting party covered some 25 miles through perpendicular wilds during the following 26 hours. This journey brought it to the Chosin Reservoir plateau at a point just southwest of Koto-ri.

Lieutenant Goggin, his slight wound the only scar of the patrol's single clash with Chinese, radioed Colonel Litzenberg that Koto-ri was clear of enemy. He then led his party southward, and in the evening of the 9th, returned through the lines of 3/7.⁵³

The Marines had been told that big game animals were hunted before the war in the mountains of northeast Korea. But not until the otherwise calm night of 9-10 November did a four-legged enemy invade the positions of RCT-7. Near the cable-car trestle, midway through Funchilin Pass, an unfriendly bear, no doubt a Russian bear, paid a nocturnal visit to the 1st Platoon of George Company. An unnamed Marine PFC, awakened in his sleeping bag, swore afterwards that the animal was wearing a hammer and sickle emblem. However this may be, the intruder was routed by his startled yell and disappeared into the night.⁵⁴

⁵¹ 7thMar SAR, 14; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; Roach Comments, 7 May 56.

⁵² Earney-Harris-Mooney interv, 20 Oct 55; CG's Diary in X Corps W/D, 8 Nov 50; Roach Comments, 7 May 56.

⁵³ 7thMar SAR, 13-14; Geer, *The New Breed*, 243-247; Goggin interv.

⁵⁴ Earney-Harris-Mooney interv, 20 Oct 55.

Koto-ri Occupied by 7th Marines

At 0830 on 10 November—the Marine Corps Birthday—the 1st Battalion passed through the 3d and emerged from Funchilin Pass onto the open plateau. Koto-ri (designated as Objective One) was occupied without opposition an hour and a half later. Litzenberg halted his column and drew up a perimeter around the mountain village.

Upon reaching the Koto-ri plateau the 7th Marines was first to meet a new enemy who would take a heavier toll in casualties than the Chinese. This was General Winter, who has won many a historic campaign. When the first cold blasts struck, "our men were not conditioned for it," commented Litzenberg. "The doctors reported numerous cases where the men came down to the sickbay suffering from what appeared to be shock. Some of them would come in crying; some of them were extremely nervous; and the doctors said it was simply the sudden shock of the terrific cold when they were not ready for it."⁵⁵

The Marines recovered quickly after "thawing out," and platoon warming tents, heated by camp stoves burning fuel oil, were set up at Koto-ri. Buckets of steaming water were provided for the warming of "C" rations.

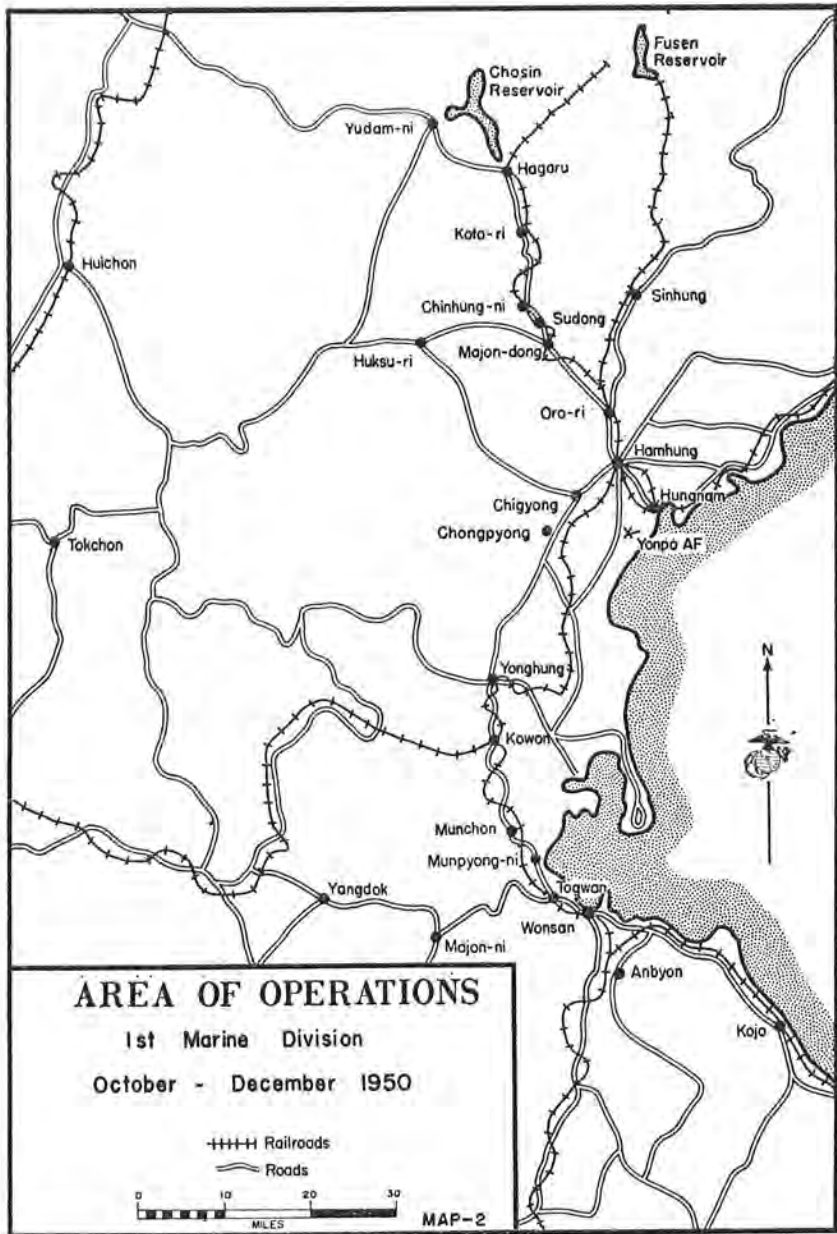
Hot weather, however uncomfortable it may be, is fighting weather as compared to sub-zero cold which seems to numb the spirit as well as flesh. Cold weather clothing is a handicap to movement and the use of firearms; and some weapons, particularly the carbine, are not dependable at low temperatures. It was probably as well for morale that the Marines at Koto-ri could not foresee that this was only the beginning of a prolonged operation in sub-zero weather without a parallel in the nation's history.⁵⁶

Until 13 November, when the 7th Marines advanced toward Hagaru, patrols from Koto-ri repeatedly sighted bands of Chinese in the distance. Except for a fight on 11 November in which C Company claimed to have inflicted 40 casualties on the enemy and lost four killed and four wounded, there was little action. With a little pressure on the ground or from the air, the enemy vanished, and thus the uneasy calm continued.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Litzenberg interv, 27–30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 45.

⁵⁶ Marshall, *CCF in the Attack*. See also FECOM, *Terrain Study No. 6*, XIX–8; R. G. Davis Comments; Dowsett Comments, 29 May 56; Cdr J. C. Craven, USN, Comments, n. d.

⁵⁷ 7th Mar SAR, 15–16; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1400 10 Nov 50; Litzenberg Comments, 19 Jul 56.



While the 7th Regiment had been fighting, marching, and climbing toward the Chosin Reservoir in early November, the 5th Marines peacefully combed the approaches to the Fusen Reservoir to the east. After detaching 1/5 to Division control on 4 November and stationing 3/5 near Oro-ri, Lieutenant Colonel Murray sent the 2d Battalion into the Sinhung Valley to relieve the 18th ROK Regiment. The relief took place at 1145 on the 4th, and Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise deployed 2/5 around a valley junction five miles north and 15 miles east of the then embattled 7th Marines.⁵⁸

Roise's mission was twofold: to block the Sinhung corridor while determining the strength and disposition of the enemy, if any; and to check certain northerly routes shown on maps as possibly leading to either the Fusen or Chosin Reservoirs, or both. Reconnaissance patrols in squad strength and combat patrols of reinforced platoons and company size fanned out in a broad arc during 5-9 November. They determined that no usable route led to either reservoir from the south, but that the highway continuing northeast from the town of Sinhung, leading to the 7th Infantry Division's zone and the Manchurian border, would carry military traffic. From 7 November, Roise's troops made daily contact with Army patrols coming down the highway, but no units tried to penetrate the apparent screen of enemy defenses close to the Fusen Reservoir.⁵⁹

Major Merlin R. Olson, 1/5's Executive Officer, led Companies A and B on 7 November in a reconnaissance in force to Huksu-ri, that annoying road junction west of Oro-ri. On the 8th Olson's force had a running fight with North Koreans before being recalled while still short of his objective. Olson's recall resulted from reports of 2000 North Koreans moving towards the MSR.⁶⁰

On 8 November, Company D (Reinf) made an overnight trek deep into a branch valley northwest of Sinhung, reaching a point about 10 miles due east of Koto-ri. One CCF soldier was captured while asleep in a house. He said he belonged to the 126th Division and that Red China would commit a total of 24 divisions against the UN forces in Korea.⁶¹

⁵⁸ 2/5 SAR, 10; CG 1stMarDiv msgs to CO 5thMar, 1605 and 2202 3 Nov 50; CG X Corps msg X 11939, 3 Nov 50; CO 5thMar msg to 2/5, 1/11, A/Engr, ATCo, 4.2" MCo, 2100 3 Nov 50; 2/5 HD, Nov 50, 2.

⁵⁹ 2/5 SAR, 10.

⁶⁰ CO 1/5 tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1820 8 Nov 50; "Special Reconnaissance of the 1st Bn 5thMar, 7-9 Nov 50," 10 Nov 50.

⁶¹ 2/5 SAR, 10, 32.

On 9 November, Colonel Murray received orders to concentrate his regiment along the MSR leading to the Chosin Reservoir. During the next two days he deployed the 1st and 3d Battalions at Majon-dong and Chinhung-ni respectively. The ambush of a Charlie Company patrol on the 10th delayed the departure of 1/5 from the Chigyong area. The patrol had to be rescued by a battalion attack the next day before the force could move to Majon-dong.⁶² On the 13th while operating out of Majon-dong a 1/5 patrol ran into 50–150 enemy who inflicted 7 KIA and 3 WIA before withdrawing.⁶³

The 2d Battalion moved out of the Sinhung Valley on 13 and 14 November to relieve the 7th Marines of the responsibility for defending Koto-ri and thus free Colonel Litzenberg's regiment for the advance to Hagaru and the north. Lieutenant Colonel Roise's battalion had completed its mission without firing more than a few shots and with a total prisoner bag of 12 North Koreans and one Chinese.⁶⁴

Although the new enemy had seemingly evaporated from the path of the 1st Marine Division, there was good reason to believe that he was not forsaking his aggressive designs in North Korea. For in addition to the ominous but questionable predictions of Chinese POWs, eyewitness accounts of pilots of VMF(N)-542 provided G-2 officers with information of the gravest portent in early November. The Marine airmen made nightly strikes from the 1st to the 9th against Sinuiju at the mouth of the Yalu, and they repeatedly reported a steady stream of trucks moving into northwest Korea from Antung, Manchuria. Time after time they blasted Sinuiju with bombs, rockets, and 20mm shells, and though parts of the city were continuously aflame, it still seethed with activity. They described southward bound traffic as "heavy," "very heavy," and even "tremendous," and at least one convoy was reported to be "gigantic."⁶⁵

⁶² 1/5 msg to 5thMar, 1956 10 Nov 50; 1/5 HD, Nov 50, 5; 5thMar URpt 4.

⁶³ 5thMar URpt 4; 1/5 HD, Nov 50, 6.

⁶⁴ 5thMar SAR, 12; 5thMar URpt 4.

⁶⁵ 1stMAW SAR, annex K, appendix I (hereafter VMF(N)-542 SAR), 1-8.

CHAPTER VII

Advance To The Chosin Reservoir

Attacks on Wonsan-Hungnam MSR—Appraisals of the New Enemy—The Turning Point of 15 November—Changes in X Corps Mission—Marine Preparations for Trouble—Supplies Trucked to Hagaru—Confidence of UN Command—Marine Concentration on MSR

ON 4 NOVEMBER, WHILE RCT-7 was at the height of its fight with the Chinese, the Division CP displaced from Wonsan to Hungnam. General Craig, the ADC, who inspected the area on the 2d, recommended the abandoned Engineering College on the western outskirts as the best location. During his visit he was shown a knoll outside the city where the bodies of some 200 Korean civilians were laid out in a perfect row. All had been victims of the retreating NKPA forces.¹

A location in Hamhung would have been preferred, but available sites were already taken by X Corps. General Smith flew to Hungnam by helicopter and opened the new CP at 1100 on the morning of the 4th. That evening a train carrying 160 officers and men of Headquarters Battalion and the Division staff arrived at 2130 from Wonsan. En route it had been fired on by guerrillas but no casualties resulted.²

A perimeter defense, consisting of two outposts and eight machine-gun positions, was set up to command all likely approaches to the new CP. Defensive wiring and trip flares were installed, with the gun positions and outposts being connected by telephone.

During these proceedings everyone was blissfully unaware of the existence of 250 tons of NKPA high explosive, stored only 600 yards from the CP in three connecting caves. Undiscovered for a week, this

¹ LtGen E. A. Craig, ltr, 20 Feb 56.

² HqBn SAR, 10-11; Smith, *Notes*, 513-514; CG 1stMarDiv msg to Subordinate Units, 2200 3 Nov 50; MajGen E. W. Snedeker Comments, 4 May 56.

enemy cache was believed capable of demolishing the command post. A 16-man security detachment was placed on guard until the explosive could be removed and detonated.³

Attacks on Wonsan-Hungnam MSR

Protection of the Wonsan-Hungnam MSR took on added importance as the 1st Marine Division speeded up its move to the north. This responsibility, it may be recalled, was shared by Division and Corps on 3 November in accordance with a decision by General Almond. The 1st Marines and elements of the 1st Tank Battalion maintained security from Wonsan 15 miles northward to Munchon, while the 1st Battalion of the 5th Marines was responsible from Hamhung southward to Chig-yong. This left the 54-mile stretch between Chig-yong and Munchon without any protection except the patrols of the Korean CIC agents and the Special Operations Company, USA, both under Corps control.

On 4 November this company reported that large numbers of North Koreans were moving into the area to the west. That same afternoon Corps notified Division that a group of mounted guerrillas had fired on railway police in the yards at Kowon, 15 miles north of Munchon.⁴

On 6 November, immediately after landing at Wonsan, the 65th RCT of the 3d Infantry Division (less one battalion, placed temporarily under 1st Marine Division control for the Majon-ni operation) was ordered by Corps to relieve elements of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion, USA, which had been recently sent to Yonghung. The Army RCT was assigned a mission of protecting the Yonghung-Kowon area and patrolling to the west (see map on Page 122).⁵

The Wonsan-Hamhung rail line took on special importance after the announcement that water transportation would be delayed until enemy mines were cleared from the harbor at Hungnam. This made it necessary for the 1st Marine Division to send daily supply trains from Wonsan.⁶ The first two completed the run without incident, but after departing Wonsan at dusk on the 6th the third train was halted at Kowon by the destruction of rails ahead. North Korean guerrillas attacked

³ HqBn SAR, 10-11; Smith, *Notes*, 513-514. Some explosive, too unstable to be moved, was left in the caves. Gen O. P. Smith ltr, 15 Apr 56.

⁴ Smith, *Notes*, 472-473; G-3 SAR, 21. The previous day an A/Tks patrol had killed an estimated 150 NKs in a short fire-fight west of Munchon. 1stTkBn, SAR, 12.

⁵ CG X Corps msg X12075, 5 Nov 50; Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, 69; Smith, *Notes*, 473.

⁶ ComNavFE msg to CinCFE, 0010 12 Nov 50.

the train, guarded by a lieutenant and 38 men from Company C of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion.⁷

The detachment was taken by surprise in the darkness by foes firing from both sides of the track. When the Marines attempted to reverse the train, the enemy wounded the engineer and put a hole in the boiler with grenades. In the darkness the guard became separated into two groups, the smaller of which was surrounded in a car. The guerrillas fired through the wooden sides, forcing the Marines to the floor, and threw grenades through the windows until all ten men were killed or wounded, only two of them surviving.

The remaining 29 men of the guard made a stand on an embankment about 200 yards from the track. Six Marines were wounded in the ensuing fire fight. The train guard broke off the action and withdrew to the area of the Army artillery battalion.

An empty train from Hamhung, guarded by a platoon from Company A of the Amtracs, was halted at 1700 on the afternoon of 6 November by railway officials at Yonghung. Reports of guerrilla activity in the area had proved to be only too well founded when elements of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion were attacked early that morning. Their perimeter south of the town was breached with losses to the Army unit of equipment and ammunition.

The 2d Battalion of the 65th RCT, which arrived at Yonghung late that afternoon, had its baptism of fire within a few hours. Guerrillas in estimated strength of 500 to 800 attacked at 0300 on the 7th, inflicting casualties of six killed and 14 wounded. Troops of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion also came under attack, as did elements of the 4th Signal Battalion, USA. Company D of the 1st Tank Battalion sent a Marine tank and "Weasel" (M-29) to evacuate the wounded with the assistance of the Amtrac platoon guarding the empty train at Yonghung.⁸

At 1400 that afternoon the empty train resumed its run to Wonsan. Only two miles had been covered when the locomotive and six cars were derailed by a split rail and wrecked just south of Yonghung. Personnel losses amounted to one man killed and 14 injured.⁹

⁷ The account of the guerrilla attack at Kowon is derived from: 1stAmphTracBn SAR, 5-6; 1stAmphTracBn HD, Nov 50, 3; Statement of Pvt Richard J. Foster, n. d.

⁸ G-3 SAR, 24; 1stTkBn SAR, 13.

⁹ The description of this fight at Yonghung is based upon: 1stAmphTracBn SAR, 5-6; 1stAmphTracBn HD, Nov 50, 3; Dolcater 3d Infantry Division in Korea, 69; G-3 SAR, 24; X Corps POR 42; and 1stMarURpt (S-3) 9; D/Tks tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 0955 8 Nov 50.

At almost exactly this same hour the fourth supply train was stopped south of Kowon by a blown section of track. The guard proceeded on foot to investigate and encountered the depressing spectacle of the third supply train, abandoned by the enemy after being plundered. One ammunition car was still burning and in another riddled car the bodies of the trapped Marines were found. So extensive was the damage to tracks and switches that rail service could not be resumed until 9 November.¹⁰

The Corps commander summoned General Smith to Wonsan that morning for a conference on measures for the security of the rail line. It was decided that only daytime runs would be made thereafter, with the train guard increased from 38 to 50 men. The 65th RCT, the 26th ROK Regiment and a battery of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion were placed under the temporary control of the 1st Marine Division with a mission of guarding bridges and other key points.¹¹

General Smith worked out a plan for the ROK regiment to drive the guerrillas southward from the Chigyong area toward the 65th RCT at Yonghung. As it proved, elements of both units were given Corps commitments which prevented this maneuver from being put into effect. They remained only a few days under nominal Division control, being used for a variety of security missions along the Wonsan-Hamhung MSR.¹²

By 9 November, when the Division supply trains resumed their runs, 95 loaded cars had accumulated at Wonsan. The 1st Combat Service Group continued to route supplies northward from the railhead at the Wonsan airfield. Corps orders required troops to ride in open gondola cars.¹³

Appraisals of the New Enemy

It is understandable that an atmosphere of uncertainty should have enveloped military decisions of this period. With the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the UN command groping their way through a fog of war, division commanders in Korea could not be expected to see very far ahead.

¹⁰ CO I Co [sic] 1stAmphTracBn tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 2215 7 Nov 50; Smith, *Notes*, 475-478.

¹¹ Smith, *Notes*, 475-478; CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *W/D* 7 Nov 50.

¹² Smith, *Notes*, 475-478; CG X Corps msg X12270, 9 Nov 50.

¹³ 1st CSG *SAR*, 8.

Disconcerting as it had been to have the Chinese appear in the first place, it was even more disturbing to have them break off contact and vanish so inexplicably. Nevertheless, General MacArthur and his staff had a fairly accurate idea of CCF numbers at this time. On 2 November the UN command estimated that 16,500 Chinese Communist soldiers had crossed the Yalu and 450,000 CCF regulars were in Manchuria. Three days later, Major General Charles A. Willoughby's intelligence summary warned that the Chinese had the potential to start a large-scale counteroffensive.¹⁴

General MacArthur, reporting to the United Nations for the first half of November, stated that 12 CCF divisions had been identified in Korea, indicating a total of perhaps 100,000 troops. Nine of these units had appeared on the Eighth Army front and three in the X Corps zone north of Hamhung.

"At the same time," the report continued, "United Nations aerial reconnaissance disclosed heavy troop movements near the border, in Manchuria, and into Korea."¹⁵

Quite as important as the new enemy's numbers was the question of his intentions. Did the CCF divisions consist merely of so-called volunteers making a demonstration to encourage the beaten NKPA remnants? Or were the Chinese contemplating an all-out military intervention?

President Truman asked JCS on 4 November to obtain from General MacArthur an estimate of the situation.¹⁶ The general's reply stated that it was "impossible to authoritatively appraise the actualities of Chinese Communist intervention in North Korea." He recommended "... that a final appraisal should await a more complete accumulation of military facts."¹⁷

During the next three days the issue of bombing bridges across the Yalu posed a question that has remained a controversial subject ever since. General MacArthur was granted permission, after being at first refused, but cautioned "that extreme care be taken to avoid violation [of] Manchurian territory and airspace."¹⁸

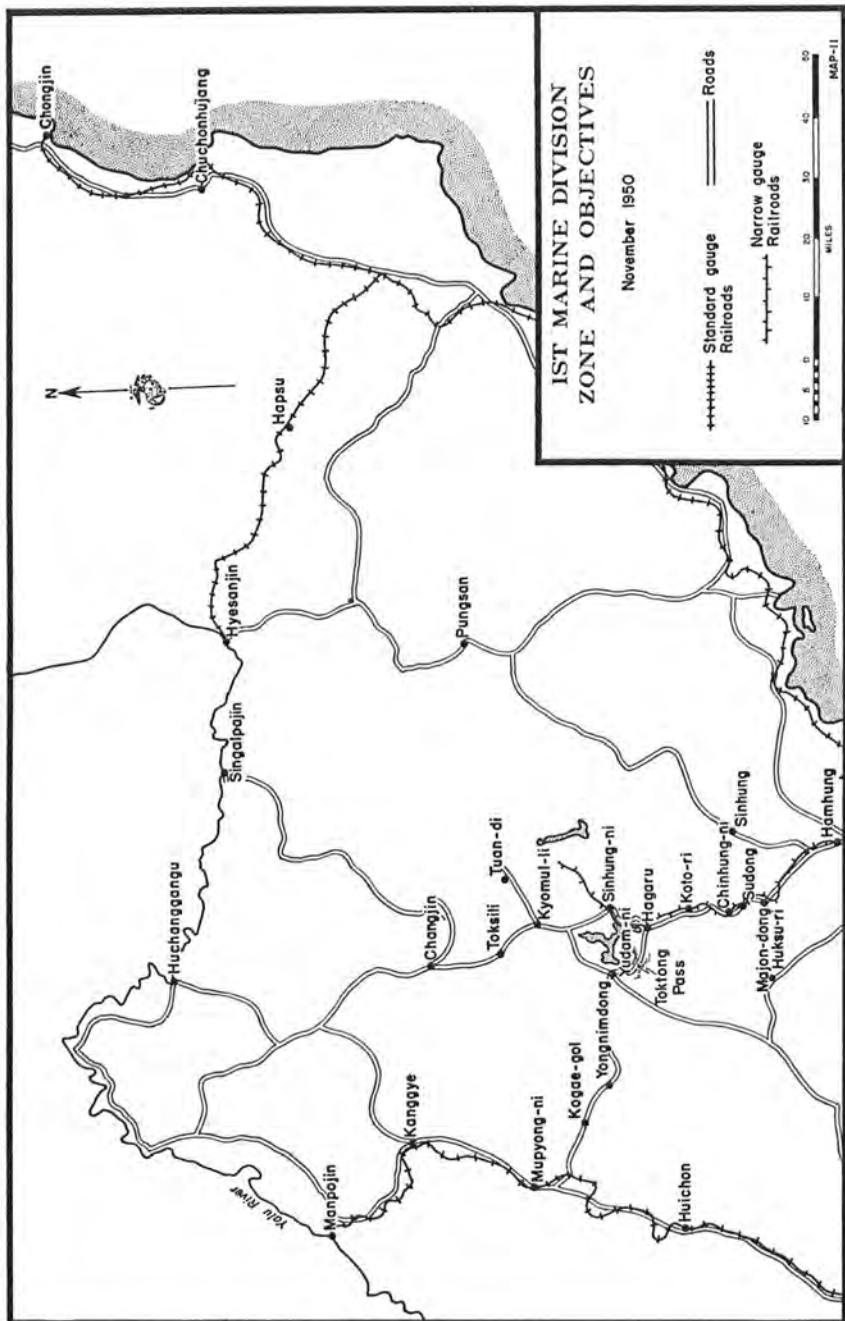
¹⁴ GHQ/UNC msgs 2977 and 2979, 3 and 5 Nov 50, as cited in Schnable, *Korean Conflict*.

¹⁵ Ninth Report of the United Nations Command Operations in Korea, for the Period 1 to 15 November 1950 in Dept State, *United Nations Action in Korea* (Washington, 1951), 9.

¹⁶ C/S USA msg 95790, 3 Nov 50; Truman *Memoirs* II, 373.

¹⁷ Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 373; CinCFE msg C68285, 4 Nov 50.

¹⁸ CinCFE msg C68396, 6 Nov 50; JCS msg 95949, 6 Nov 50; JCS msg 95878, 5 Nov 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 375-376; Whitney, *MacArthur*, 405-411.



**IST MARINE DIVISION
ZONE AND OBJECTIVES**

November 1950

- +++++ Standard gauge Railroads
- ==== Roads
- - - - - Narrow gauge Railroads



MAP-11

In two messages of 7 November, the UN commander confirmed his original appraisal to the effect that the Chinese were not making a full-scale intervention. But he conceded that reinforcements might enable the new enemy to stop the UN advance or even throw it into reverse. He planned a resumption of the initiative, he said, in order to take "accurate measure . . . of enemy strength." And he repeated that the restriction of his bombing operations provided "a complete sanctuary for hostile air immediately upon their crossing of the Manchuria-North Korean border." This factor, he warned, could "assume decisive proportions. . . ."¹⁹

On this same date, with the wary phase of UN strategy at its height, General Almond flew to Hungnam to confer with General Smith. The X Corps commander still wore another hat as General MacArthur's chief of staff; and though he could not function actively in this position, he kept in close touch with strategic aims at Tokyo. Thus the cautious spirit of the UN commander's messages of 7 November was reflected in Almond's changed viewpoint. Where he had previously urged haste in the X Corps drive to the border, he was now disposed to put on the brakes and carry out that mission with less scattering of forces.

The prospect of a winter campaign was discussed, and the Marine general recommended that only enough territory be held for the security of Hamhung, Hungnam and Wonsan. Almond believed that Hagaru should also be included, but he agreed that a greater degree of concentration was advisable.²⁰

As day after day passed without further CCF contacts of importance, however, operations again took on the character of an occupation rather than a drive which might end in a collision with a powerful new enemy.

X Corps OpnO 6, issued at 2400 on 11 November, called for an advance to the border by I ROK Corps on the right, the 7th Infantry Division in the center and the 1st Marine Division on the left. The 3d Infantry Division, with the 26th ROK Regiment attached, was to have the responsibility for the Wonsan-Yonghung area after relieving elements of the 1st Marine Division; the Marines were directed to take blocking positions at Huksu-ri and Yudam-ni. In the Corps rear, the 1st KMC Regiment (-) had a zone to the south and west of Kojo.

The Marine zone on the Yalu, about 40 miles in width, was ap-

¹⁹ CinCFE msgs C68456 and CX68436, 7 Nov 50; Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 377.

²⁰ Smith, *Notes*, 552-553.

proached and bounded by two roads branching off from the Changjin area. One of them ended at Huchanggangu and the other at Singalpa-jin. From that point the zone of the 7th Infantry Division extended east to Hyesanjin (where the border turns north at a right angle) and thence again eastward to the Hapsu area. I ROK Corps was to operate from the line Hapsu-Chuchonhujang and drive northward along the coast with Chongjin as an objective.²¹

Such a dispersion of forces, depending for supplies on poor secondary roads through wild mountain regions, could hardly have been contemplated if large-scale CCF opposition were expected. As a further indication of renewed confidence, General MacArthur asked informally and indirectly that X Corps do everything possible to assist the Eighth Army in its drive to the Yalu. This request was conveyed in a personal letter of 11 November from General Wright, G-3 of FECOM, to the Corps commander.²²

The Turning Point of 15 November

The date of General Almond's reply, the 15th, is worthy of recognition as a turning point. For it was also the occasion of messages from the UN commander-in-chief and the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division which had an effect on strategy. Indeed, the entire course of the Chosin Reservoir campaign was channeled into new directions as a result of the concepts advanced in these three communications of 15 November 1950.

Obviously the gap of 80 miles separating the Eighth Army from X Corps would have to be reduced before much help could be given by the latter. General Almond replied to General Wright in a letter proposing that X Corps attack to the west of the Chosin Reservoir while also continuing to advance northward in zone to complete its original mission.

That same day, while the letter was en route to Tokyo, General MacArthur came to a far-reaching decision. In a radio message he directed the X Corps commander to develop, as an alternative to OpnO 6, a plan for reorienting his attack to the west on reaching Changjin in order to cut the Chinese MSR, as represented by the Manpojin-Kanggye-Huichon road and rail line.

²¹ X Corps OpnO 6, 11 Nov 50.

²² X Corps Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 Nov to 10 Dec 50, 9; X Corps WDSum, Nov 50, 5.

This was the first indicated change in mission, according to the X Corps command report, since CINCFE's directive late in October calling for a drive to the border. The amendment "was made necessary," the report continued, "by the enemy build-up in front of the Eighth Army and the fact that the enemy action had halted the first attempt . . . to advance Eighth Army to the border. An estimate of the Eighth Army situation . . . fixed the relative combat power as 100,000 UN to 100,000 enemy with UN forces having air superiority and superior artillery support. . . . The enemy was given an offensive capacity which he could implement with an estimated reserve of 140,000 CCF troops north of the Yalu River. In view of the enemy's offensive capacity, Eighth Army adopted a conservative plan to make a general advance with the main effort in the center generally parallel to the enemy MSR (Huichon-Kanggye). This course of action was designed to meet any course of action which might be adopted by the enemy. To assist the Eighth Army advance, X Corps was to initiate a main attack to the West from the Chosin Reservoir area, cutting the enemy MSR at Mupyong-ni, and advance in a northwesterly direction to the Yalu River line at Manpojin."²³

By a coincidence it was also on Wednesday, 15 November, that General Smith wrote a letter which foreshadowed future military events. Addressed to General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, this communication made it plain that the 1st Marine Division commander and his staff did not share in the renewed optimism as to the course of the UN war effort. Not only did the Marines accept the possibility of imminent and formidable CCF intervention, but they were making preparations to meet it.

So far our MSR north of Hamhung has not been molested, but there is evidence that this situation will not continue. . . .

Someone in high authority will have to make up his mind as to what is our goal. My mission is still to advance to the border. The Eighth Army, 80 miles to the southwest, will not attack until the 20th. Manifestly, we should not push on without regard to the Eighth Army. We would simply get further out on a limb. If the Eighth Army push does not go, then the decision will have to be made as to what to do next. I believe a winter campaign in the mountains of North Korea is too much to ask of the American soldier or marine, and I doubt the feasibility of supplying troops in this area during the winter or providing for the evacuation of sick and wounded.

The letter mentioned such preparations as the work done by Marine

²³ X Corps *WD Sum*, Nov 50, 4-5.

engineers to strengthen the Hamhung-Hagaru road for tanks and heavy vehicles. Plans had been approved, added General Smith, for an airstrip at Hagaru capable of landing cargo planes for resupply and casualty evacuation.

He emphasized that he did not mean to be pessimistic. "Our people are doing a creditable job," he said; "their spirit is fine, and they will continue to do a fine job." But in conclusion he reiterated his doubts about his "wide open left flank" and his concern over "the prospect of stringing out a Marine division along a single mountain road for 120 air miles from Hamhung to the border."²⁴

General Smith had no more than finished dictating his letter when two Navy officers called at the CP—Rear Admiral Albert K. Morehouse, chief of staff to Admiral Joy, and Captain Norman W. Sears, chief of staff to Admiral Doyle. Both were old acquaintances of the Marine general, who had led the assault landing force on Peleliu in 1944 while Sears commanded an LST group. Smith felt that he could speak frankly, therefore, and expressed his concern over the aspects of the strategic situation he had discussed in the letter.²⁵

CINCPAC had requested in his message of the 1st that the plan for re-orienting the X Corps attack be submitted to him as an alternative to OpnO 6. General Almond put his staff to work on the 16th, and that same day Draft No. 1, of OpnO Plan 8 was completed. This was a concept of an attack on Kanggye by means of a drive westward from Changjin.²⁶

Changes in X Corps Mission

Almond disapproved the first draft on the grounds that the MSR of the Corps element making the effort would be too far extended. He requested the preparation of a new plan based on the concept of an advance farther south on the Hagaru-Mupyong-ni axis and west of the zone of the 1st Marine Division. The X Corps commander also directed:

²⁴ MajGen O. P. Smith ltr to Gen C. B. Cates, 15 Nov 50. Gen Almond comments: "I am very mindful of the skepticism of General Smith in all of the supply plans that X Corps conceived and I sympathize with his viewpoint very thoroughly. However, in my mind there was always the assistance to be gained by air supply either drop or landing them and the counterpart of that, the evacuation to be expected by plane from the air field that we were to build." Almond ltr, 22 Jun 56.

²⁵ Smith, *Chronicle*, 31.

²⁶ This section is based on: X Corps *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 9; and X Corps *WDSum, Nov 50*, 5-6, 51-52.

(1) That the Hamhung-Hagaru road be developed as a Corps MSR with intensive effort on the part of Corps troops, including Corps engineers;

(2) That an RCT of the 7th Division be assigned the mission of seizing Changjin in order to protect the right flank of the 1st Marine Division.

The Corps commander considered that Changjin and Mupyong-ni were too widely separated as objectives to be assigned to a single division, not to mention the difficult terrain. His staff worked for four days on Draft No. 2 of OpnO Plan 8 before submitting it to him. He accepted it with several modifications and directed that the third draft be taken to Tokyo by Lieutenant Colonel John H. Chiles, the Corps G-3, for presentation to GHQ.

Marine Preparations for Trouble

General Smith, for his part, lost no time in putting into effect his preparations for trouble in the shape of a formidable CCF attack. The completion of mine clearance at Hungnam had opened that port on 15 November, thus easing the transportation situation. That same day the 7th Marines occupied Hagaru, being greeted by a temperature of four degrees below zero which threatened an early and bleak winter.

Only four days previously, X Corps OpnO No. 6 had directed the 1st Marine Division to take up blocking positions to the west, at Huksu-ri and Yudam-ni, while continuing the northward advance to the Yalu. This meant a further dispersion at a time when Smith hoped to reduce the 163 road miles separating his infantry battalions.

In order to carry out the Corps directives, Division OpnO 21-50 of 13 November assigned the following tasks:

RCT-1—to seize Huksu-ri;

RCT-7—to seize Hagaru, and, on order, to seize Yudam-ni;

RCT-5—to protect the MSR from positions at Majon-dong, Chinhung-ni and Koto-ri, while preparing to pass through RCT-7 in the Hagaru area and advance to Changjin (approximately 40 miles northward);

Division Reconnaissance Company—to screen the Division right flank by operating in the Soyang-ni-Sinhung valley to the east Division boundary.²⁷

²⁷ 1stMarDiv OpnO 21-50, 13 Nov 50. The orders for the seizure of Hagaru and the 5th Mar's movement of a battalion to Koto-ri had been issued in CG 1stMarDiv FragO, 2130 12 Nov 50. Hagaru was occupied without a fight at 1300 on the 14th. CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1437 14 Nov 50.

In connection with the mission of RCT-7, the words "on order" deserve special notice. For the commanding officer was directed by Smith's oral instructions to take up blocking positions at Toktong Pass, about halfway between Hagaru and Yudam-ni, until additional units of the Division could be moved up to the Hagaru area. In other words, the Division commander believed that the possibilities of large-scale CCF intervention were such as to justify caution in the drive to Yudam-ni²⁸

Not only would the concentration of the Marine units ease General Smith's concern over the tactical situation; it would also greatly simplify the administrative load. Colonel Bowser has commented, "Division was faced with the problem of handling a division scattered from Wonsan and Majon-ni in the south to the heavy engagement of the 7th Mar in the north. Add to this the problem of guerrilla bandits between Wonsan and Hungnam/Hamhung as well as a completely unknown situation to the West, and you have a task of considerable magnitude for any division staff."²⁹

RCT-1 was delayed several days by lack of railway facilities in its move 70 miles northward to Chigyeong after being relieved in the Wonsan area by the 3d Infantry Division.³⁰ But most of the other Marine units had been pulled up—a battalion or even a company at a time—as far as the Hungnam area. Along the new MSR north of Hamhung, the column of advance on 15 November consisted of these units:

Hagaru—RCT-7;

Koto-ri—2d Battalion, RCT-5;

Chinhung-ni—3d Battalion, RCT-5; Battery K, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines; Detachment 1st Ordnance Battalion; Detachment 1st Service Battalion; 1st and 2nd Platoons, Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion; Company B (less 3d Platoon), 1st Engineer Battalion;

Majon-dong—1st Battalion RCT-5; Company D, 1st Tank Battalion.

The Division command and staff took a dim view of the possibility of completing "the race to the Yalu" before winter. It was already too late, if sub-zero temperatures were any indication; and preparations must now be made for tactical and logistical support of a midwinter campaign in the mountains. Among the most essential provisions were the selection of a forward base, the construction of airstrips along the MSR, and the strengthening of the road to make it fit for tanks and heavy vehicles.

²⁸ Smith, *Notes*, 592-594.

²⁹ Bowser Comments.

³⁰ 1stMar SAR, 13.

Hagaru, at the foot of the Chosin Reservoir, had been recommended by General Craig as the best location for a forward base when he visited here on the 15th. The commanding generals of the Division and Wing arrived for a tour of inspection the next day. General Harris made the trip at the express request of General Almond, who believed that a strip long enough to land R4Ds was necessary to insure resupply and casualty evacuation in a midwinter emergency. One of the few comparatively flat pieces of real estate in northeast Korea was found just south of the town. The black loam promised to make a hard surface in freezing weather, so that the prevailing arctic temperatures offered at least one consolation.³¹

An OY strip had been completed on 13 November at Koto-ri, but heavier engineer equipment was needed at Hagaru. Before it could be brought forward, the road from Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri required strengthening and widening. This task had already been assigned to Lieutenant Colonel Partridge, commanding the 1st Engineer Battalion. After a survey by jeep, he decided to begin operations at the highest point of the one-way dirt road.

"By working down," he explained, "we could first of all provide for what we considered to be a dangerous accumulation of snow, and the problem of land slides. . . . The work on the road involved a good bit of drainage in order to insure that the melting snows from day to day during the sunlight hours would not filter across and destroy the road bed. It involved demolitions and drilling and a good deal of dozer and grader work."³²

Enough progress had been made by 18 November so that armor could be sent forward to support RCT-7. Only the day before, the 1st Tank Battalion had begun functioning with its Headquarters and Service Companies at Soyang-ni, eight miles northwest of Hamhung. The road between Chinhung-ni and Koto-ri was still impassable for M-26 (Pershing) tanks until the engineers could widen some of the turns. But Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. Milne, the battalion commander, organized a provisional tank platoon consisting of two M4A3 (Sherman) tanks from Headquarters Company and four dozer tanks from Company D at Majon-dong. They proceeded without incident on the 18th to Hagaru, operating as a gun platoon.³³

³¹ Smith, *Notes*, 614; LtGen F. Harris ltr, 24 Aug 56.

³² LtCol J. H. Partridge interv by HistDiv, HQMC, 25 Jun 51, 31-32.

³³ 1stTkBn SAR, 18. 1stEngrBn had been ordered to prepare the MSR for tank use on 6 Nov. CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stEngrBn, 1530 6 Nov 50.

Opening the mountain road to heavy traffic made it possible on the 18th to begin work on the Hagaru airstrip. Five large dozers with pans of eight cubic yards capacity arrived at the site the next day, and Company D of the 1st Engineer Battalion tackled the job of hacking out a runway from ground frozen as hard as granite. Plans called for a cut of 90,000 cubic yards and a fill of 60,000 for a 3200-foot runway. The rub was that engineering field manuals prescribed a runway of 3600 feet for R4Ds or C-47s at sea level, plus an additional 1000 feet for each 1000 feet of altitude. And since Hagaru was about 4000 feet above sea level, it could only be hoped that pilots were right in estimating that a strip of 3000 to 4500 feet might do in a pinch.³⁴

The 19th also dated the establishment of the Supply Regulating Station at Hagaru for the purpose of building up stockpiles. Prior to this time, the 1st Service and 1st Ordnance Battalions had been in charge of division dumps at Hamhung. Supplies arrived by rail after being unloaded from the ships at Wonsan by the 1st Shore Party Battalion and the 1st Combat Service Group.

The completion of mine clearance made it possible to order the latter organization to Hungnam by sea to operate in-transit depots for X Corps. Practically all Division supplies were soon being received by sea at this port, where the 1st Combat Service Group separated the incoming cargo into proper classifications and forwarded it to the dumps at Hamhung. Port operation was the responsibility of the 2d Engineer Special Brigade, USA. After the project got into full swing, from 2000 to 2500 Korean laborers were employed at Hungnam and as many as 6000 tons of cargo unloaded in 24 hours.³⁵

A limited amount of rolling stock was available for the narrow-gauge railway from Hungnam to Chinhung-ni. But it was up to the Marines to put the line back into operation, for the X Corps Railway Transportation Section already had its hands full with the Wonsan-Hamhung route. The 1st Service Battalion was authorized to make the attempt, and enough Korean crews were rounded up to operate the trains. Chinhung-ni thus became the railhead for supplies trucked the rest of the way to Hagaru.³⁶

Preparations were also made for large-scale casualty evacuation to

³⁴ CG 1stMarDiv msg to CG X Corps, 1229 18 Nov 50; Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 39-40.

³⁵ Kenneth W. Condit, "Marine Supply in Korea," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvii, no. 1 (Jan 53), 53-54.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

the Division hospital at Hungnam. H&S, A and B Companies of the 1st Medical Battalion remained there to set up the Division hospital while D, C and E Companies were attached to RCTs 1, 5 and 7 respectively. As the Division center of gravity shifted northward, medical officers foresaw the need of a hospital-type facility at Hagaru in addition to the clearing stations contemplated at Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni. Plans were approved, therefore, for Companies C and E to pool their resources at Hagaru and establish a medical supply dump. Additional surgical teams were to be flown to Hagaru in an emergency by Companies A and B from the hospital at Hungnam.

Meanwhile the hospital ship *Consolation*, commanded by Captain John W. McElroy, USNR, prepared to move from Wonsan to Hungnam. There the Division hospital had been enlarged to 400 beds, and an additional 100 to 150 were planned for the new annex at Hamhung. In order to speed up casualty evacuation, several heated railway cars were equipped for that purpose on the 35-mile narrow-gauge line from Chinhung-ni.³⁷

Supplies Trucked to Hagaru

Provisions for the advance of RCT-5 east of the Chosin Reservoir were included in Division OpnO 22-50, issued at 0800 on 17 November. As a preliminary, RCT-7 was given a two-fold mission: (1) to protect the Division left flank between Hagaru and Yudam-ni with a minimum of a battalion; and (2) to relieve elements of RCT-5 and protect the MSR in zone from positions in the vicinity of Hagaru, Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni.

RCT-5 was assigned these missions: (1) to pass a minimum of a battalion through RCT-7 at Hagaru; (2) to move up the east side of the Chosin Reservoir and seize Sinhung-ni, about 7 miles northeast of Hagaru; and (3), on order, to seize the road junction at Kyolmul-ni, some 20 miles north of Hagaru.

Division Reconnaissance Company was to screen the left flank of the MSR in the vicinity of Majon-dong, and the 11th Marines to maintain its 4th Battalion in that area prepared for employment in the north on order.

³⁷ CG 1stMarDiv msg to Subordinate Units, 2345 20 Nov 50; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex HH (hereafter 1stMedBn SAR), 4-7.

OpnO 22-50 directed the Supply Regulating Detachment (1) to establish a truckhead at Hagaru after taking over and consolidating the dumps of RCT-7; (2) to control traffic between Koto-ri and Chingung-ni; and (3) to support RCTs 5 and 7, with priority to RCT-5. The following supply levels were fixed:

Classes I and III, five days;

Class V, 1 Unit of fire;

Classes II and IV, as required for all troops operating to the north and west of Koto-ri.³⁸

Although the advance westward to Huksu-ri remained the mission of RCT-1, the shortage of rail and motor transport slowed the movement from Wonsan to Chigyong. The last elements had not arrived on the 18th when Corps asked and received the consent of Division to the employment of the 26th ROK Regiment for the attack on Huksu-ri, with the understanding that the objective would be turned over to RCT-1 at a later date. On the morning of the 19th the ROK unit left Chigyong to execute its mission.³⁹

Two days later RCT-1 was relieved of this responsibility when Corps verbally notified Division that Huksu-ri had been placed within the modified boundary of the 3d Infantry Division. This was confirmed the next day by X Corps OI 17, which also directed the Division to establish blocking positions at Yudam-ni.⁴⁰

Up to this time General Smith had not been able to make much progress toward Yudam-ni without dispersing his units to an extent which he regarded as imprudent. But with the availability of RCT-1 to occupy positions on the MSR behind the other two infantry regiments, he could now push ahead.

As an added factor, the 1st Marine Division had just acquired a new unit. Early in November Admiral Joy had inquired if General Smith could use the 41st Independent Commando, Royal Marines. This British unit of 14 officers and 221 enlisted men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas B. Drysdale, and attached to ComNavFE in Japan, had requested service with the U. S. Marines. Smith replied that he would be glad to have these fine troops. Highly trained in reconnaissance, they could operate with the Division Reconnaissance Com-

³⁸ 1stMarDiv *OpnO* 22-50, 17 Nov 50.

³⁹ 1stMar *SAR*, 12; G-3 X Corps tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1220 18 Nov 50; 26thROK msg to 3dInfDiv, 1030 19 Nov 50.

⁴⁰ Smith, *Notes*, 638-639; X Corps *OI* 17, 22 Nov 50. See also G-3 X Corps tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1850 20 Nov 50, in G-3 *Journal*, X Corps *WD*, 20 Nov 50.

pany in protecting the flank of the Marine advance. The British Marines arrived at Hungnam on the 20th and reported to the 1st Marine Division.⁴¹

Division OpnO 23-50, issued at 0800 on the 23d, directed the Commandos to locate and destroy enemy forces on the left flank, ranging as far as 13 miles west of Koto-ri. It was hoped that the British unit and the Division Reconnaissance Company might flush out CCF troops beyond the reach of routine infantry patrols. Other tasks assigned to elements of the Division were as follows:

RCT-7—to seize Yudam-ni and maintain one battalion in that position;

RCT-5—to seize Kyolmul-li (20 miles north of Hagaru) and be prepared to seize Toksil-li (10 miles northwest of Kyolmul-li) and Tuan-di (15 miles northeast of Kyolmul-li) on order;

RCT-1—to relieve elements of RCT-7 in the vicinity of Hagaru and Koto-ri and protect the Division MSR from positions in the vicinity of Hagaru, Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni;

1st Tank Battalion (less detachments)—to protect the MSR from positions in the vicinity of Majon-dong and Soyang-ni;

1st Engineer Battalion—to support Division operations with priority to the maintenance of the MSR and construction of the airfield at Hagaru.

OpnO 23-50 also provided that the Supply Regulating Station Detachment continue operation of the truckhead at Hagaru and stock supplies at the following levels: Classes I and III, 8 days; Classes II and IV, as required; and Class V, one and one-third U/F for all troops operating to the north and west of Chinhung-ni.⁴²

The trucking facilities of the Division had been strained to the limit ever since the Wonsan landing. Shortly afterwards the bulk of the 7th Motor transport Battalion was taken under the operational control of X Corps, and it became necessary to attach the 1st Motor Transport Battalion to RCT-7. On 19 November, however, the 1st MT (less detachments) had passed to the control of the 1st Supply Regulating Detachment at Hagaru. There the truckers not only built up the stockpile of supplies but rendered the best support that units of the division had known so far along the MSR.⁴³

⁴¹ Smith, *Notes*, 638-639; 1stMarDiv *POR* 164.

⁴² 1stMarDiv *OpnO* 23-50, 23 Nov 50.

⁴³ 1stMarDiv *SAR*, annex II (hereafter 1st MTBn *SAR*), 4, 7; 7th MTBn *SAR*, 2-3.

Confidence of UN Command

General MacArthur did not appear to be shaken by EUSAK G-2 reports during the third week of November which called attention to a formidable CCF build-up on both sides of the Yalu. On the contrary, a UN order of the 20th, giving directions for the conduct of troops at the border, indicated that an occupation rather than a fight was expected:

Elements of minimum size only will be advanced to the immediate vicinity of the geographical boundary of Korea. No troops or vehicles will go beyond the boundary between Korea and Manchuria, or between Korea and the USSR, nor will fire be exchanged with, or air strikes be requested on forces north of the northern boundary of Korea. Rigid control of troop movements in vicinity of northern boundary will be exercised. *Damage, destruction or disruption of service of power plants will be avoided.* No personnel, military or civilian, will be permitted to enter or leave Korea via the Manchurian or USSR border. Commanders will insure that the sanctity of the international border is meticulously preserved.⁴⁴

The italicized sentence emphasizes an assumption which had made converts in high State Department as well as Defense circles in Washington. The Chinese, according to this conjecture, were concerned chiefly with defending their Manchurian frontier and guarding the power complexes along the Yalu. As evidence, it was pointed out that early in November the Sinuiju radio described the CCF troops crossing the river as a "volunteer corps" for the protection of the hydro-electric plants along the Yalu serving Mukden, Dairen and Port Arthur. Proceeding from this premise, it was a logical conclusion that if no provocation were given these forces, a large-scale fight might be avoided.⁴⁵

General MacArthur, after receiving a qualified permission to bomb the Yalu bridges, had enjoined UN airmen not to violate territory or air space on the other side of the river. This meant that the bomber crews must take much greater risks, since their restricted axes of approach and flight paths were known to enemy antiaircraft gunners in advance. Moreover, CCF jet fighters could attack and retire to the sanctuary of Manchuria when hard-pressed.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ CG X Corps msg X12811, 20 Nov 50. Italics added.

⁴⁵ See Memo Chairman JCS to SecDef: "Chinese Communists Intervention in Korea," 9 Nov 50; and Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 372.

⁴⁶ JCS msg 95949, 6 Nov 50; CinCFE msg CX 68411, 7 Nov 50; Schnable, *Korean Conflict*. See also Karig, *Korea*, 376-378.

Despite these handicaps, Air Force and Navy bombers knocked out four of the twelve international bridges and damaged most of the others. These efforts doubtless imposed delays, but troops and supplies continued to cross throughout November.⁴⁷ After arrival in North Korea, they seemed to vanish into that void of mystery which had swallowed up Chinese Communist troops ever since they broke off contact.

Students of history may have recalled at this time that one of the most significant engagements of modern history was known as the Battle of the Yalu. From a tactical viewpoint, to be sure, the clash of 30 April 1904 was not a great affair. The Japanese army, after disembarking at Chemulpo (Inchon) and marching up the Korean peninsula, numbered five times the Russian force which opposed the crossing of the Yalu at Uji, just east of Sinuiju. A Japanese victory was doubtless to be expected, yet a new page of history had opened. For the first time in modern chronicles, an Asiatic army had successfully challenged a European army with the weapons and tactics of the Machine Age.

Now, nearly half a century later, history was repeating itself as another Asiatic army crossed the Yalu with unknown capabilities and intentions. If the Chinese Communists were merely sending a force to guard the hydro-electric complexes and frontier, hopes of peace by Christmas might be realized. But if the invaders were secretly massing for an all-out counter-offensive, a great new war might soon be flaming up from the ashes of the old.

Little fault can be found with current G-2 estimates of CCF numbers, which hold up surprisingly well even when viewed with the wisdom of hindsight. Quite as much depended on interpretations of CCF intentions by the UN command, and there can be no doubt that an end-of-the-war atmosphere prevailed on the eve of the Eighth Army offensive of 24 November.

Thanksgiving Day, which fell on the 23d, was celebrated both in Korea and the United States in a spirit of rejoicing over a victorious peace which seemed almost within grasp. It was a tribute to American bounty as well as organizational genius that the troops in Korea were served a dinner which would have done credit to a first-rate Stateside restaurant. The menu, as proposed by X Corps to component units,

⁴⁷ Schnable *Korean Conflict*. Bombing of the bridges ceased 6 December with the freezing of the Yalu. OCMH, *Report from the Secretary of Defense . . . on Operations in Korea*, (Draft No. 1), Pt. V, 3-4.

included shrimp cocktail, stuffed olives, roast young tom turkey with cranberry sauce, candied sweet potatoes, fruit salad, fruit cake, mince pie and coffee.⁴⁸

As an item of good news for this Thanksgiving, it was learned the day before that the 17th Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division had reached the Yalu at Hyesanjin. Not a single Chinese soldier had been encountered by troops who had troubles enough with sub-zero temperatures and mountain roads.⁴⁹

Since the first week of November, in fact, there had been no clashes of any importance with the invaders from Red China. On the 24th, as usual, the front was quiet everywhere except for minor patrol contacts. Yet this was the D-day of the great Eighth Army offensive, and the stirring communique of the commander-in-chief was read to all troops in Korea. It was a message in the bold spirit of Inchon, and no one could doubt the confidence of the UN command after hearing these words:

The United Nations massive compression envelopment in North Korea against the new Red Armies operating there is now approaching its decisive effort. The isolating component of the pincer, our air forces of all types, have for the past three weeks, in a sustained attack of model coordination and effectiveness, successfully interdicted enemy lines of support from the north so that further reinforcement therefrom has been sharply curtailed and essential supplies markedly limited. The eastern sector of the pincer, with noteworthy and effective naval support, has now reached commanding enveloping position, cutting in two the northern reaches of the enemy's geographical potential. This morning the western sector of the pincer moves forward in general assault in an effort to complete the compression and close the vise. If successful, this should for all practical purposes end the war, restore peace and unity to Korea, enable the prompt withdrawal of United Nations military forces, and permit the complete assumption by the Korean people and nation of full sovereignty and international equality. It is that for which we fight.⁵⁰

/s/ DOUGLAS MACARTHUR,
*General of the Army,
 United States Army,
 Commander-in-Chief.*

⁴⁸ X Corps ltr to Subordinate Commands, 16 Nov 50.

⁴⁹ This was the only American unit ever to push as far north as the border. On the Eighth Army front a regiment of the 6th ROK Division reached the Yalu on 26 October, only to be cut off and badly mauled a few days later in the first CCF attacks. EUSAK, *WDSum*, Oct 50, 38, 44.

⁵⁰ CinCUNC Communique 12, 24 Nov 50.

Eighth Army troops found it something of an anticlimax, after this message, to jump off without meeting any large-scale opposition. General MacArthur, who flew to the front for the occasion, watched from his plane as the UN columns moved out unmolested, as if conducting a motor march.

"The Army offensive began, as scheduled, at 1000 hours on 24 November," said the EUSAK report. "Since for some time there had been little contact with enemy forces the advance of EUSAK elements was in the nature of a meeting engagement, with little or no resistance in the initial stage. Across the Eighth Army front as a whole, advances were made from 4000 to 16,000 yards."⁶¹

Marine Concentration on MSR

On this same day Lieutenant Colonel Chiles presented X Corps OpnPlan 8, Draft 3, at Tokyo. It was approved at UNC Headquarters with only one modification—the shifting of the proposed boundary between X Corps and Eighth Army farther to the south in the zone of the 1st Marine Division.

This plan was the basis of X Corps OpnO 7. Issued on the 25th, it provided for a reorientation of the X Corps attack to provide more assistance for Eighth Army. H-hour was to be 0800 on the 27th, and the principal units of X Corps were assigned these tasks:

1st Marine Division—to seize Mupyong-ni and advance to the Yalu;

7th Infantry Division—(1) to attack from east side of Chosin Reservoir and advance to Yalu in zone; (2) to secure Pungsan area, coordinating with 1 ROK Corps;

1 ROK Corps—to advance from Hapsu and Chongjin areas, destroying enemy in zone to north boundary of Korea;

3rd Infantry Division—(1) to gain and maintain contact with the right flank of Eighth Army in zone; (2) to protect the left flank of X Corps; (3) to support the 1st Marine Division on X Corps order; (4) to protect harbor and airfield at Wonsan; (5) to destroy enemy guerrillas in zone.⁶²

A Corps warning order, issued on the evening of the 24th, was supplemented by a briefing session at Corps Headquarters at 1000 the next morning. General Smith learned that his division was to be the northern arm of the pincers in the "massive compression envelopment"

⁶¹ EUSAK W'D, 24 Nov 50.

⁶² X Corps OpnO 7, 25 Nov. 50.

while the 7th Infantry Division took over the previous Marine mission of advancing east of the Chosin Reservoir to the Yalu.⁵³

The new Marine boundary cut across Korea to the north of Eighth Army. From Yudam-ni the Marine route of advance led to Mupyong-ni 55 miles to the west. This objective was about halfway between Huichon in the south and Kanggye in the north (see map, Page 130). From the latter, which was believed to be the assembly area of the NKPA remnants, a good road led about 40 miles north to Manpojin on the Yalu.

In accordance with Corps OpnO 7, the rear boundary of the 1st Marine Division had been moved north to a line just south of Hagaru. The 3d Infantry Division had the responsibility for the area south of Hagaru, but this unit had so many other commitments that it could assign few troops to the task. General Smith was granted permission therefore, to retain garrisons at Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni. This left the 3d Infantry Division responsible for the protection of the MSR from Sudong southward to Hamhung.⁵⁴

Corps OpnO 7, in short, provided for a wide envelopment to be spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division on 27 November. The other arm of the pincers, of course, was to be the Eighth Army; but on the evening of the 25th came the disturbing news that its right wing, the II ROK Corps, had been hurled back by a surprise CCF counterstroke. This reverse took place in the vicinity of Tokchon, about 70 air miles southwest of Yudam-ni.⁵⁵

EUSAK intelligence reports, as it proved, were not far off the mark in estimating enemy strength on the Eighth Army front at 149,741 troops at this time.⁵⁶ During the past few days, however, estimates of probable enemy courses of action had been so reassuring as to justify the confidence of CINCFE's communique on D-day. Even the setback of the 25th was not regarded as alarming.

"With the possible exception of the relatively vague situation on the east flank," said the next day's G-2 report, "the enemy reaction to the EUSAK attack has been one of active defense with local counterattacks in strength." The enemy's probable course of action was believed to be "an active defense in depth along present lines employing strong local counterattacks in conjunction with continued guerrilla activities."

⁵³ CG X Corps msg X 13069, 24 Nov 50; CG's Diary in X Corps *WD*, 25 Nov 50. Smith, *Notes*, 727.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Notes*, 727-729.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 728; EUSAK *WD*, 26 Nov 50.

⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that this is an increase of 95,741 over EUSAK's estimate of the day before. EUSAK *PIR* 136, encl. 2, 3, in EUSAK *WD*, 25 Nov 50.

with bypassed units; limited air activity; and further reinforcement by CCF or USSR forces."⁵⁷

On the X Corps front the reorientation of the attack to the west gave General Smith a long-sought opportunity to collect his dispersed units and achieve a relative degree of concentration. The release of RCT-1 from its Huksu-ri mission made it possible to bring that infantry regiment up behind the other two. This move in turn enabled RCT-5 to advance east of the Chosin Reservoir and RCT-7 to push on to Yudam-ni.

Progress might have been more rapid for all units if adequate transportation had been available for RCT-1 in the Chigyeong area. Only by using vehicles of the 11th Marines was it possible to move 1/1 to Chinhung-ni, where it relieved the 3d Battalion of the 5th Marines on 23 November. During the next two days the 2d Battalion and RCT-1 Headquarters relieved 2/5 at Koto-ri. After the return of the vehicles, 3/1 (less Company G, left behind for lack of trucks) was lifted to Hagaru on the 26th to relieve the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.⁵⁸

All three battalions of RCT-5 were operating east of the Chosin Reservoir by 24 November. Until supply levels were built up at Hagaru, however, General Smith kept a careful check on the advance in this quarter. The farthest penetration took place on the 25th when a platoon-size patrol of 3/5, reinforced by two tanks, drove nearly to the northern end of the Reservoir. Scattered enemy groups were flushed out and an abandoned 75mm gun destroyed after a pursuit resulting in five Chinese killed and one captured. This was one of the few encounters in an area combed by patrols from all three battalions, and no signs of large-scale enemy activity were reported by Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Taplett, CO of 3/5, after a helicopter reconnaissance.⁵⁹

Meanwhile RCT-7 began its move to Yudam-ni. This objective had first been mentioned as early as 11 November in X Corps OpnO 6. But until RCT-1 could be brought up to the MSR, the Division Commander limited the advance to the vicinity of Toktong Pass. There an estimated 150 to 200 enemy resisted with machine-gun fire but were scattered with the aid of air strikes and artillery support.

On the 23d, in accordance with Division OpnO 23-50, the 1st Battalion led the advance of RCT-7. During the next two days Lieutenant

⁵⁷ EUSAK PIR 137, 4, and encl 4, 3, in EUSAK W/D, 26 Nov 50.

⁵⁸ 1stMar SAR, 13, and appendix 6, 4; 1stMar HD, Nov 50, 2; 1stMarDiv msg to COs 11th & 1stMars, 1350, 22 Nov 50.

⁵⁹ 5thMar SAR 15-18. Smith, *Notes*, 626.

Colonel Davis's reinforced battalion methodically cleared booby-trapped but undefended road blocks and scattered small groups of enemy along the route. The men of 1/7 belatedly celebrated Thanksgiving on the 24th with a full, hot turkey dinner—their last full meal for 17 days—and seized battered Yudam-ni the next day against negligible resistance.⁶⁰ The 3d Battalion, regimental headquarters, and 3/11 (-) followed.

Marine operations east of the Chosin Reservoir came to an end at 1200 on the 25th with the relief of RCT-5 by the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, 7th Infantry Division. Corps orders called for this unit to remain under operational control of the 1st Marine Division until the assumption of command in the area by the CO, 31st Infantry. All elements of RCT-5 were to be relieved by the following noon for the mission of advancing to Yudam-ni and then passing through RCT-7 to lead the attack toward Mupyong-ni.⁶¹

This was in accordance with Division OpnO 24-50, issued at 0800 on the 26th to implement the provisions of Corps OpnO 7. The jump-off was to be at 0800 on 27 November, with the first objective the road junction at Yongnim-dong (27 road miles west of Yudam-ni), in preparation for further advance on order to the high ground about one mile south of Kogae-gol and 35 miles west of Yudam-ni. Other provisions of OpnO 24-50 were as follows:

RCT-7—to seize and secure Yudam-ni without delay, and when passed through by RCT-5, to protect the Division MSR from Sinhung-ni (7 miles west of Hagaru) to Yudam-ni;

RCT-5—to pass through RCT-7 west of Yudam-ni by 0800, 27 November, advance to the west and seize first objective, prepared for further advance;

RCT-1—in Division reserve, to occupy positions in the vicinity of Chinhung-ni, Koto-ri and Hagaru for the protection of the MSR;

11th Marines—less detachments, to provide general support from positions in the vicinity of Yudam-ni;

41st Commando—reinforced, to move to Yudam-ni prepared for operations to the southwest to protect Division left flank;

Reconnaissance Company—to move to Yudam-ni and reconnoiter to the north in co-ordination with operations of RCT-7.⁶²

General Smith, flying by helicopter from Hungnam to Yudam-ni on

⁶⁰ 7thMar SAR, 19-20; MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 19 Jul 56; Col R. G. Davis Comments, n. d.

⁶¹ 5thMar SAR, 18; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 5thMar, 2101, 25 Nov 50.

⁶² 1stMarDiv OpnO 24-50, 26 Nov 50.



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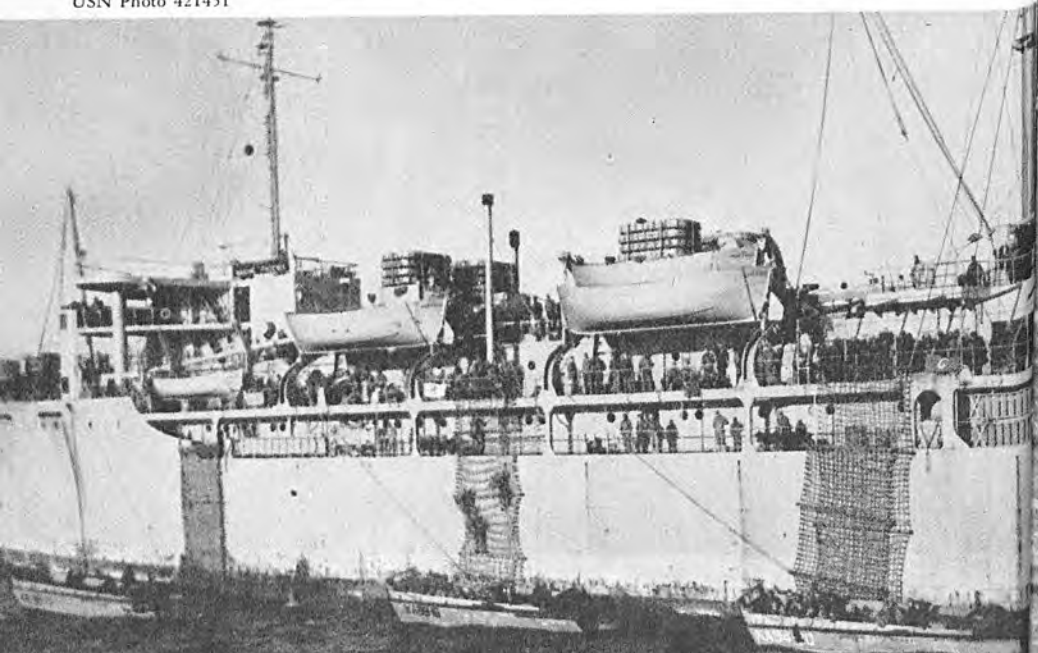
Operation Yo-Yo—Back and forth, changing course at twelve-hour intervals, the ships bearing the Marines and their gear mark time during mine clearance operations at Wonsan.



USA Photo SC 35158

Wonsan Arrivals—Above, Bob Hope entertaining Marine airmen who were first to reach the seaport; and, below, Marine infantry disembarking from cargo nets of Marine Phoenix into the LCVPs.

USN Photo 421451





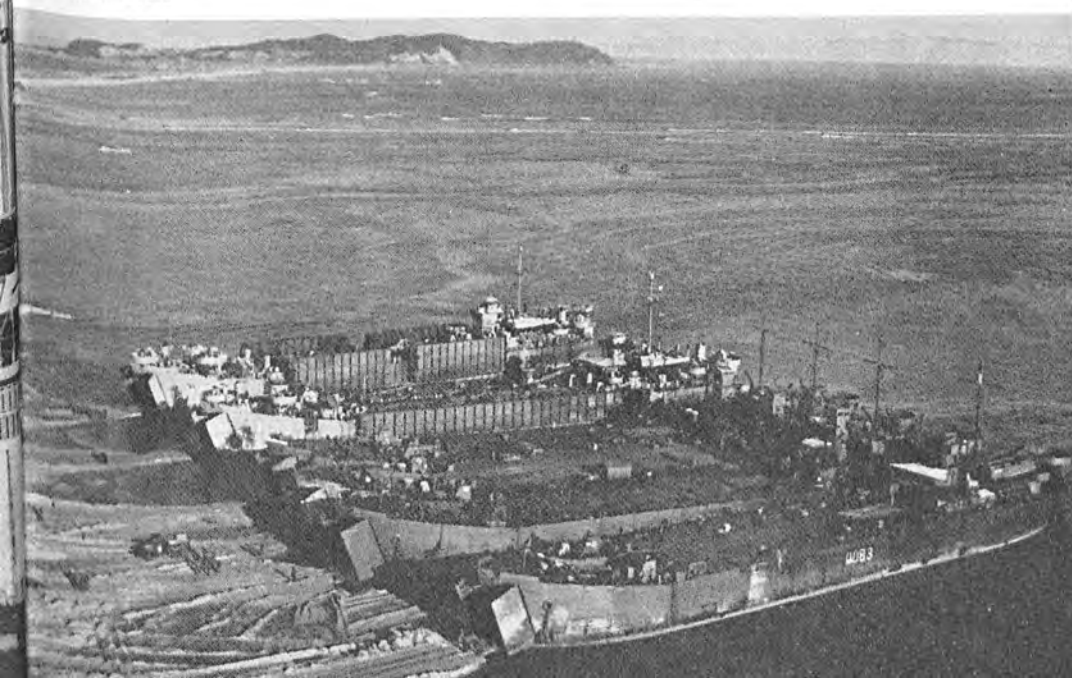
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USN Photo 421362

Administrative Landing—Above, an LCM and a troop-laden amtrac in Wonsan harbor; and, below, LSTs drawn up abreast to land the thousands of tons of supplies required by a division.

USN Photo 421388





USA Photo SC 35172

Wonsan Scenes—Above, a camouflaged hangar on Wonsan airfield; below, Marine infantry in railway station awaiting transportation shortly after their debarkation.

USMC Photo A 4552





USMC Photo A 4323

First Action in Northeast Korea—Two views of Marine infantry mopping up guerrillas after surprise counterattack in Kojo area by NKPA troops escaping to join Chinese Reds.

USMC Photo A 4327





USN Photo 423189

Photo courtesy LtGen E. A. Craig

On the Planning Level—Above, RAdm J. H. Doyle, CTF-90, and BrigGen E. A. Craig, ADC of 1st Marine Division; below, V/Adm A. D. Struble, Cdr JTF-7, and MajGen E. M. Almond, CG X Corps, in the USS Missouri.

USN Photo 422376



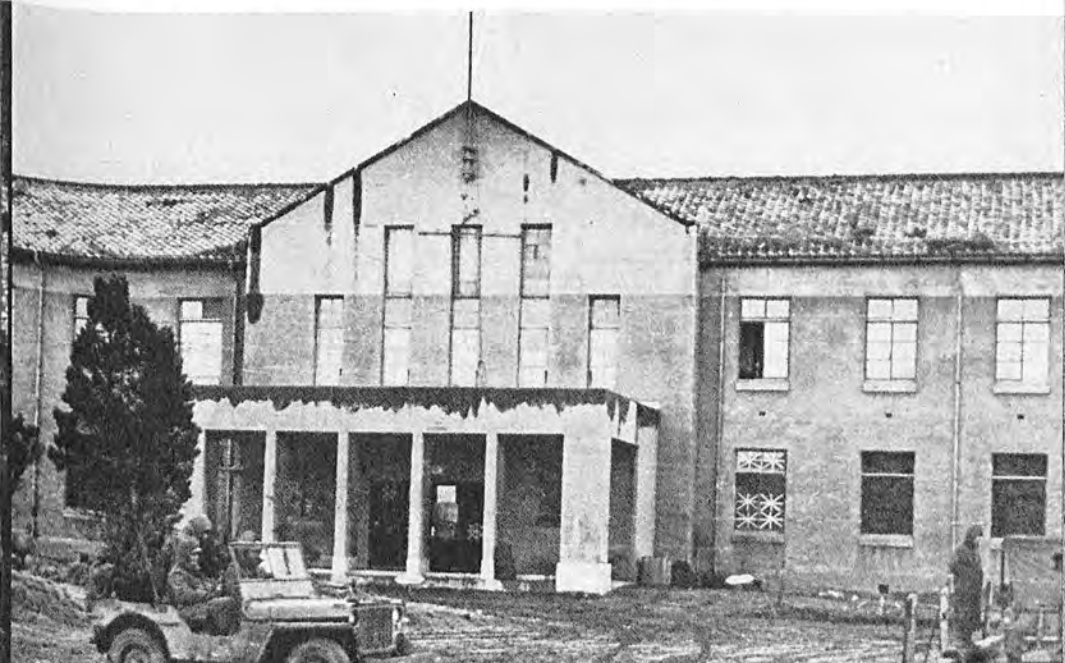


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USA Photo SC 391740

Command Conference—Above, left to right, MajGen W. J. Wallace, USMC; LtGen L. C. Shepherd, Jr., USMC; MajGen O. P. Smith, USMC; MajGen E. A. Almond, USA; and MajGen Field Harris, USMC; below, 1st Marine Division CP at Hungnam.

Photo courtesy LtGen E. A. Craig



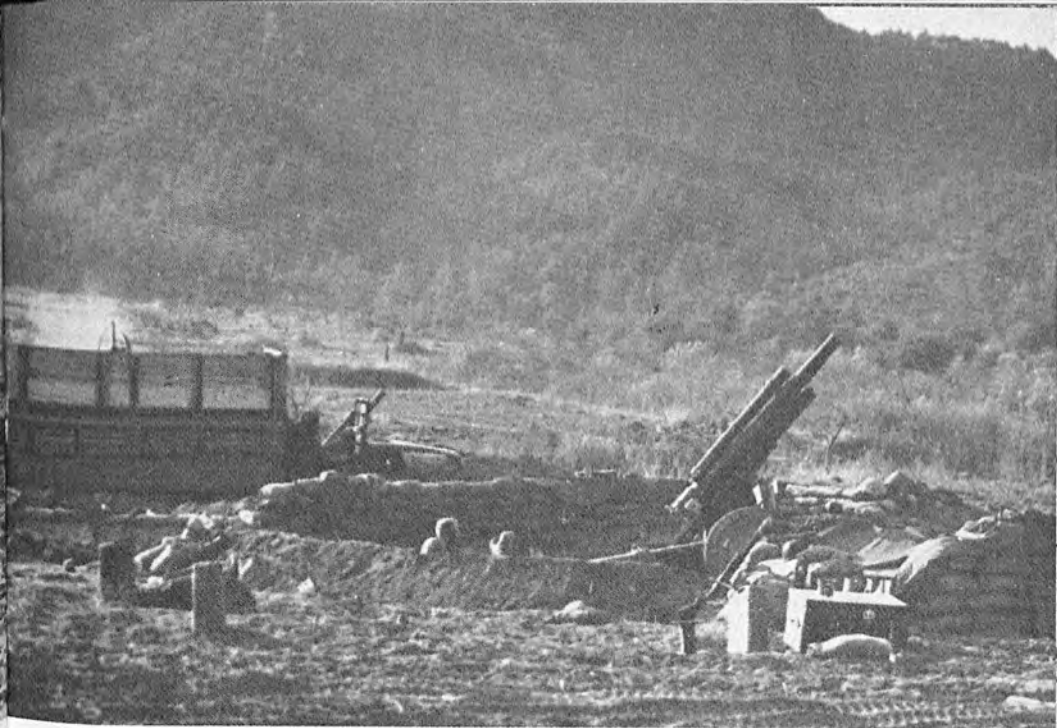


USMC Photo A 455

First Chinese Resistance—Above, infantry of 7th Marines setting up mortar during initial encounter with Chinese in northeast Korea; and, below, enemy tank killed by Marine fire.

Photo courtesy Maj R. B. Crossman

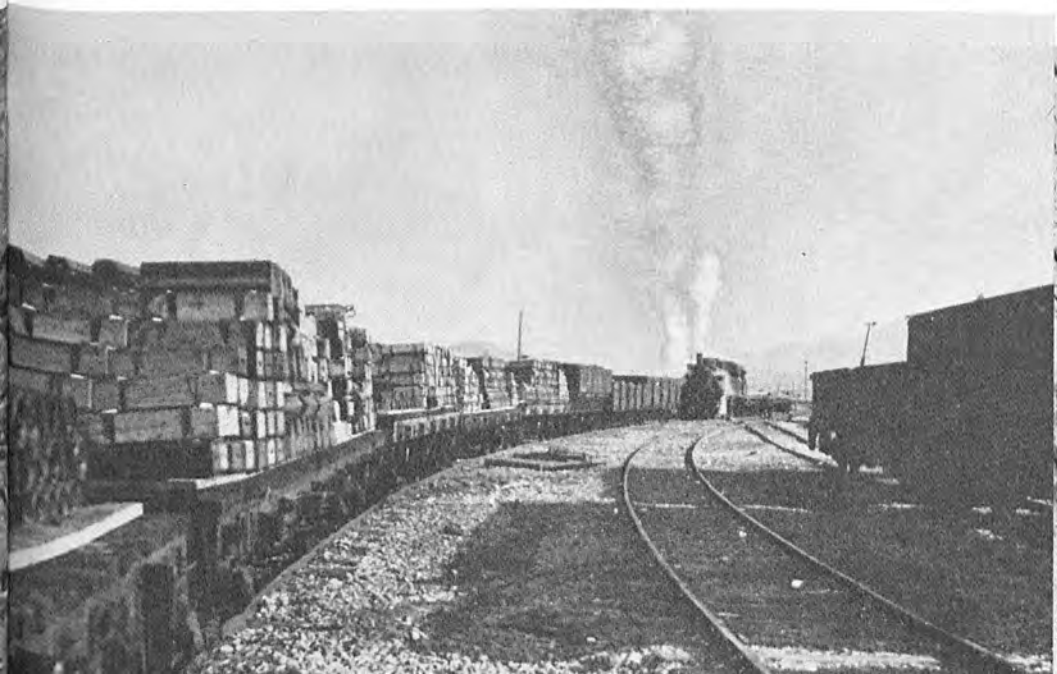




USMC Photo A 4550

Advance of RCT-7—Above, artillery emplacement of Battery G, 11th Marines, on 3 November 1950; and, below, supplies transported over railroad from Wonsan to Hambung.

SA Photo SC 352741





USA Photo SC

As Seen from the Air—Above, "Frozen Chosin" and the rugged terrain of the Reservoir area; and, below, an aerial view of the MSR winding its precarious way through Funchilin Pass—"a cliff on one side and a chasm on the other."

Photo courtesy LtGen E. A. Craig





USMC Photo A 5389

As Seen by the Infantry—Here are two views of the sort of terrain encountered by the infantry of the 1st Marine Division; sometimes it was as difficult to complete an approach march as to dislodge the enemy after arrival.

USMC Photo A 5432





USMC Photo A 4841



USMC Photo

Air Supply and Evacuation—Above, an air drop of supplies and helicopter evacuation of casualties at Yudam-ni; below, parachute-rigged cases of ammunition in an Air Force C-47.

USA Photo SC 353608





USMC Photo A 4860

Preparations for Yudam-ni Breakout—Above, Marines selecting gear for breakout from Yudam-ni to Hagaru; and, below, the first stages of the three-day fighting advance.

USMC Photo A 4843





USMC Photo A 450

Chinese Communist POWs—Above, these CCF prisoners don't seem unhappy about their captivity; below, a Chinese officer being interrogated with the aid of an interpreter.

USMC Photo A 5206





USMC Photo A 5675

Marines on the March—These two pictures give some idea of the exhaustion of Marines, many of them walking wounded, as they huddle by the roadside during halts of the Yudam-ni breakout.

USMC Photo A-5676





USMC Photo A 5

Covered by Artillery—Above, a 105mm howitzer fires to the rear as the infantry fights its way forward from Yudam-ni; below, a quarter of a mile per hour was considered good progress.

USMC Photo A 4863



the morning of the 26th, could survey the MSR below him and reflect with satisfaction that it was now easier to count the Marine outfits south of Chinhung-ni than those to the north. These included the 1st Tank Battalion with the exception of the provisional platoon at Hagaru and the 2d Platoon of Company D at Chinhung-ni. Transportation had not yet been provided for the 41st Commando, but the new unit was scheduled to move up in convoy on the 28th with Headquarters Battalion when the Division CP displaced from Hungnam to Hagaru. By that time only service units and a few platoons of tanks and engineers would be left in the rear area.

At Hagaru the C-47 airstrip was taking shape as the dozers hacked away at the frozen earth night and day, working under flood lights in the darkness. Companies C and E of the 1st Medical Battalion had set up clearing stations and built up dumps of medical supplies. Troop units at Hagaru and Yudam-ni had two days' supplies of rations and fuel, but only a unit of fire was stockpiled at Hagaru in addition to the half unit carried by the troops.

Marine motor columns were winding along the narrow, twisting mountain road from Hagaru to Yudam-ni in preparation for the attack in the morning. Upon arrival at Lieutenant Colonel Davis's 1/7 CP, General Smith learned to his discomfort that the hovering ability of a rotary-wing aircraft is curtailed at high altitudes. The helicopter dropped like a stone the last ten feet, but fortunately no injury resulted to passenger, pilot or machine.⁶³

On the 26th intelligence arrived at Hamhung from the 7th Marines, reporting capture of three soldiers from the 60th CCF Division. They asserted that the 58th, 59th, and 60th Divisions of the 20th CCF Army had reached the Yudam-ni area on the 20th. According to these enlisted men, Chinese strategy envisioned a move south and southeast from Yudam-ni to cut the MSR after two Marine regiments passed.⁶⁴

X Corps had received similar reports of Chinese movement southeast from Yudam-ni as well as air reports of enemy activity north and northeast of the Chosin Reservoir. Six Chinese divisions had now been identified in northeast Korea but both Corps and Division intelligence estimates of probable enemy action continued to be optimistic. Although Chinese attacks on the division's MSR or along the Huichon-Huksu-ri-

⁶³ Smith, *Chronicle*, 89.

⁶⁴ CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1935, 26 Nov 50.

Hamhung axis were not ruled out, G-2 officers seemed to consider a continued westward withdrawal more likely.⁶⁵

Division planning went ahead on the assumption of commander and staff that the enemy would be met in strength in the mountainous country west of Yudam-ni. This was the basis for the decision to pass the relatively fresh 5th Marines through the 7th for the attack westward.⁶⁶

It was a cold, clear Sunday afternoon when General Smith returned to Hungnam. From his helicopter he could see for several miles on either side, and no signs of enemy activity were discerned in the snow-clad hills. After his arrival at the Division CP, however, the Marine general was informed that the situation had gone from bad to worse in west Korea. The II ROK Corps on the right flank had disintegrated on the 26th under a second day's heavy blows, thus exposing the 2d Infantry Division and Turkish Brigade to flank attack. In short, the Eighth Army offensive had been brought to a standstill before the Marines could jump off in the morning as the other arm of the United Nations envelopment.

⁶⁵ X Corps, *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 32; 1stMarDiv PIR 33.

⁶⁶ Smith ltr, 15 Apr 56. See also Smith, *Chronicle*, 79, 82, 87.

CHAPTER VIII

Crisis at Yudam-ni

Marine Attack on 27 November—Marine Disposition Before CCF Attack—The Battle of Northwest Ridge—Chinese Seize Hill 1403—Fighting at 3/5's CP—The Battle of North Ridge

THE 2D BATTALION, vanguard of the 5th Marines, completed its move from the east coast of the Chosin Reservoir to Yudam-ni during the afternoon and evening of 26 November. After deploying his command south of the village, Lieutenant Colonel Roise and his S-3, Major Theodore F. Spiker, made a reconnaissance in preparation for the next day's attack.¹

Yudam-ni lies in the center of a broad valley surrounded by five great ridges, named in relation to their direction from the village: North, Northwest, Southwest, South, and Southeast. Beginning at the rim of the valley, each of these ridges extends several thousand yards and includes many peaks, spurs, and draws, certain of which took on special significance as the crisis at Yudam-ni unfolded.

A finger of the Chosin Reservoir reaches toward Yudam-ni in the valley between North and Southeast Ridges. The other four corridors radiating from the valley are highway routes. Lieutenant Colonel Roise surveyed the westerly road, which leaves Yudam-ni between Northwest and Southwest Ridges. His assigned objective encompassed distant spurs of these heights, bordering the road about a mile and a half west of the village.²

The 7th Marines (-) was disposed in perimeter around Yudam-ni on terminal hills of four of the five ridges: D and E Companies (attached

¹ 2/5 HD, Nov 50, 8-9.

² 5thMar OpnO 39-50, 26 Nov 50.

to 1/7) on North Ridge, 3/7 on Southwest, and 1/7 on South and Southeast.³ Since the high ground occupied by 3/7 overlooked the route of attack and Roise's objective, Colonel Litzenberg⁴ later in the day specified a new destination for 2/5, a pass ten miles west of Yudam-ni. It was a big order, but Litzenberg's troops would support the 5th Marines' outfit by making limited advances along the skylines of Northwest and Southwest Ridges. With this protection on his flanks initially, Roise could concentrate more strength for the drive through the low ground.⁵

Nightfall of 26 November was accompanied by an abrupt temperature drop to zero degrees Fahrenheit. The north wind screamed across the frozen reservoir and lashed the Marines on the valley floor and hillsides around Yudam-ni. At 2200, a group of half-frozen company commanders gathered within the flapping walls of Roise's blackout tent to receive their orders. The attack was to start at 0800 the next morning, with 2/5 passing through the 7th Marines in a column of companies. Recoilless rifles and 4.2-inch mortars of the 5th Marines would support the advance, along with First Lieutenant Wayne E. Richards' 2d Platoon of Able Company Engineers. Two Corsairs of VMF-312 and a spotter plane from VMO-6 were to provide aerial reconnaissance and close air support.⁶

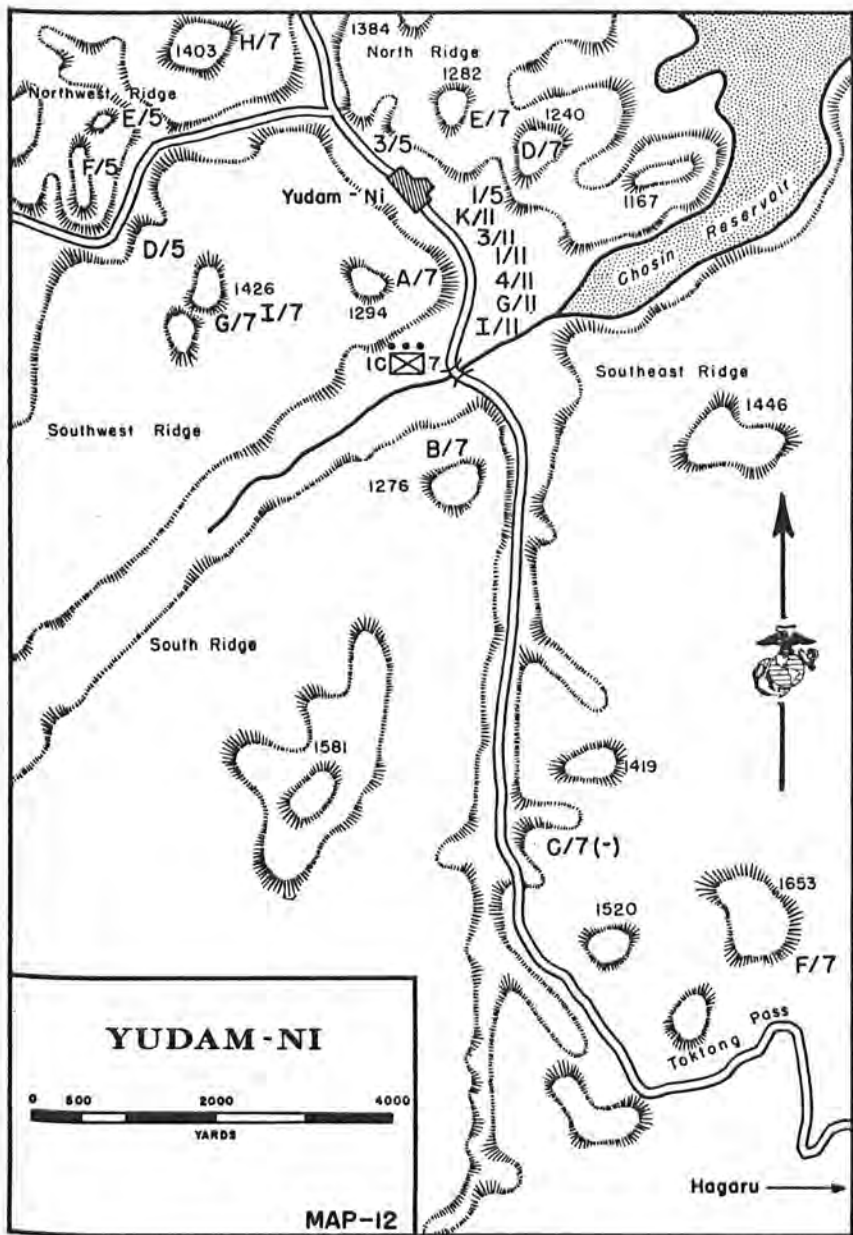
In other wind-blown tents, 7th Regiment officers learned of their missions as assigned by Colonel Litzenberg. The 3d Battalion would move farther along the crest of Southwest Ridge on 27 November and also seize the terminal peak, Hill 1403, of Northwest Ridge across the MSR, in order to support 2/5's attack more effectively. Dog and Easy Companies were to patrol North Ridge and the west coast of the Reservoir, while 1/7 scouted both South and Southeast Ridges and

³ The transport priority given the move of the 5th Marines prevented H&S and Weapons (—) Companies from moving to Yudam-ni. Fox Company moved to Toktong Pass on the 27th while How Battery of 3/11 remained at Hagaru to support Fox Company. The two rifle companies of 2/7 at Yudam-ni were assigned to 1/7 for operational control. MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 19 and 20 Jul 56; LtCol W. D. Sawyer Comments, 7 Sept 56.

⁴ Col Roise states that he was attached to the 7th Marines in the absence of the Commanding Officer, 5th Marines. The record does not indicate a formal attachment. Col Litzenberg appears to have acted in his capacity as senior officer present. See Col R. L. Murray Comments, n. d.; Col H. S. Roise Comments, n. d.; LtCol H. J. Woessner Comments, 13 Nov 56.

⁵ 7thMar SAR, 20; 2/5 SAR, 14; 2/5 HD, Nov 50, 8-9; Litzenberg Comments, 19 and 20 Jul 56; Sawyer Comments, 7 Sep 56. Roise Comments.

⁶ 2/5 SAR, 14.



their adjoining corridors. Particular attention would be paid to the valley running southward between these hill masses, for therein lay the vital road to Hagaru.⁷

Marine Attack on 27 November

The Yudam-ni perimeter was quiet throughout the long, frigid night of 26–27 November. At dawn the basin and hillsides came alive with parka-clad figures stamping and clapping life back into leaden limbs. Gradually they began to cluster around small fires to thaw out the morning rations and their weapons.

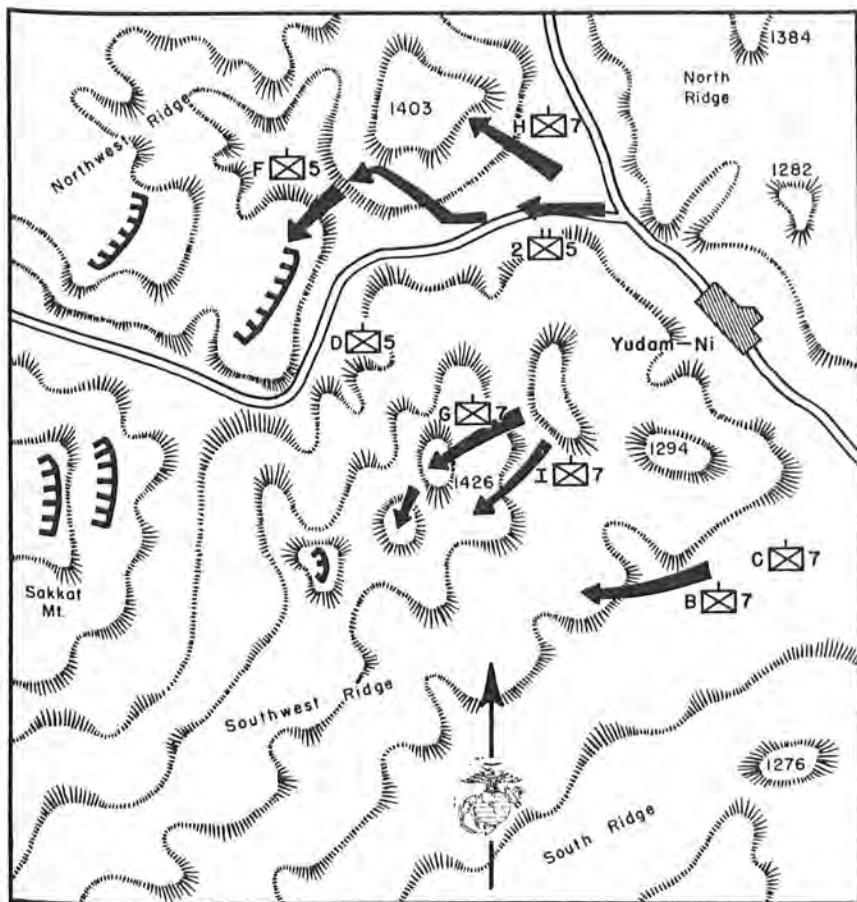
Companies G and H of 3/7 jumped off in the attack at 0815, the former to extend the foothold on Southwest Ridge, the latter to seize Hill 1403, terminal height of Northwest Ridge. Led by Captain Leroy M. Cooke, How Company advanced unopposed and secured its objective by midmorning.⁸ Captain Cooney's Company G moved rapidly 1200 yards along the crest of Southwest Ridge and occupied a commanding peak, Hill 1426, at 0845 without meeting opposition. But when Cooney resumed the advance, his troops almost immediately came under fire from enemy positions on another peak 500 yards away.⁹

During 3/7's operations on the high ground the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, had marched out of Yudam-ni and launched the main attack along the road. Company F, under Captain Uel D. Peters, led 2/5 as it passed beneath the steep walls of Southwest and Northwest Ridges. The first objective was a long spur of the latter height, 500 yards across a draw from the 7th Marines on Hill 1403. Approaching the mouth of the draw on the right of the road, Fox Company was hit by long-range small-arms fire from enemy emplacements on the objective. About the same time, 0935, a message from the VMO-6 spotter plane told of CCF positions all across the front. Captain Peters held up momentarily to appraise the situation, and engineers moving behind his outfit began to clear the first of nine unmanned enemy roadblocks that obstructed the MSR.

⁷ 7thMar FragO, 1850 26 Nov 50; 7thMar SAR, 20–21.

⁸ Cooke had taken over the company on 12 November, and Lieutenant H. H. Harris reverted to ExecO.

⁹ Unless otherwise stated this section is derived from: 7thMar SAR, 20–21; RCT 7 URpt 5; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; 2/5 SAR, 15–18; 2/5 HD, Nov 50, 9; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex SS, appendix A (hereafter 1/11 SAR), 8–9; VMF-312 SAR, 15; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1945 27 Nov 50; LtCol M. A. Hull Comments, n. d.



MARINE ATTACKS - 27 NOV

← Marine Attacks

☞ CCF Positions

0 1000 2000 3000 4000



YARDS

MAP-13

According to plan, Company F ascended part way up the slopes of Hill 1403 and then advanced across the front of the 7th Marines to the head of the long draw that set off the Communist-held spur. Simultaneously, 4.2-inch and 81mm mortar crews positioned their weapons along the road to support this envelopment. The flatlands south of Yudam-ni trembled as the 105mm howitzers of Lieutenant Colonel Harvey A. Feehan's 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, opened up at 1015 with a 15-minute preparation.¹⁰

While Company F moved overland to strike at the left (north) flank of the CCF position, Captain Samuel S. Smith's Dog Company edged forward along the MSR to the mouth of the draw. Like the earlier unit, it was met by a hail of bullets. The regimental 4.2-inch mortars opened fire on the crest of the spur, and recoilless rifles slammed 75mm shells into bunkers just now sighted on the forward slopes. At 1115, after ground supporting arms had partially neutralized the CCF positions, Corsairs of VMF-312 blasted the objective with rockets and bombs.

In the wake of the air strike, First Lieutenant Gerald J. McLaughlin led Fox Company's 1st Platoon against the enemy's north flank, the rest of the company supporting the assault by fire from Hill 1403. Most of the Chinese defenders fled to the west, and McLaughlin's troops cleared the northern half of the spur by 1300, capturing three Red soldiers. The 2d Platoon, commanded by Second Lieutenant Donald J. Krabbe, then passed through to secure the southern half, overlooking the road. Although the attackers encountered only negligible local resistance, they were slowed by heavy machine-gun fire sweeping in from a peak 1000 yards farther west.

During Company F's action on the high ground, Dog Company filed around the road bend at the south end of the spur and moved toward a valley junction a few hundred yards away. This fork is dominated by Sakkat Mountain to the west; and the Chinese, in order to block the Marine advance, had dug tiers of entrenchments on the eastern slopes of the massive height. Frontal fire from these positions converged on Company D's column. Faced by such formidable resistance and terrain Lieutenant Colonel Roise discontinued the attack. At 1430 he ordered Fox Company to set up on Northwest Ridge for the night, and Dog to deploy defensively across the MSR on a spur of Southwest Ridge.

¹⁰ Feehan, on 15 Nov 50, had relieved LtCol Ransom M. Wood who had commanded 1/11 since its arrival in Korea with the 1st ProvMarBrig on 2 Aug 50.

On the crest of the latter, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, had found progress increasingly costly during the afternoon of 27 November. The peak beyond Hill 1426 was occupied by Company G at 1500,¹¹ bringing that unit on line with Dog Company of 2/5 in the low ground to the north. Like the 5th Marines' outfit, Company G was now confronted with the broad crescent of CCF fortifications buttressed by the defensive complex on Sakkat Mountain. Machine-gun barrages drove the 7th Marines' unit off the hilltop, and Company I of 3/7 rushed forward from the high ground overlooking Yudam-ni to add its firepower in support. Baker Company of 1/7, on patrol in the valley between Southwest and South Ridges, ascended into the bullet-swept zone at 1230 to help out. When it became heavily engaged, elements of Company C were ordered forward from the Yudam-ni vicinity as reinforcement. Thus parts of three battalions, 2/5, 3/7, and 1/7, felt the storm of steel and lead on Southwest Ridge throughout the afternoon.

While fighting raged in an arc from south to west on the 27th, another danger area was discovered to the north and northeast, completing a vast semicircle of known CCF concentrations in proximity to Yudam-ni. A patrol from Company D of 2/7, moving over North Ridge along the west coast of the reservoir, ran into heavy machine-gun and mortar fire about 4000 yards from the village. Marine air struck at the entrenchments of an estimated enemy company, and at 1645 the patrol withdrew with several casualties to Company D's lines on the southern tip of North Ridge.

At dusk on the 27th a general calm settled over Yudam-ni, broken only occasionally by scattered exchanges of small-arms fire. The main Marine attack had netted about 1500 yards, placing 2/5 on the objective originally assigned by the regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel Murray. That the Chinese did not allow this battalion to advance three more miles, to its new objective and into hopeless entrapment, seems inconsistent in view of the CCF plans for the night of 27-28 November. The auxiliary attack by 3/7 won 1200 more yards of the crest of Southwest Ridge, and the occupation of Hill 1403 by How Company of that battalion represented a gain of about 2000.

In a few hours, the Marines would give thanks that their successes on 27 November had been modest ones.

¹¹ While returning to the rear to bring up reinforcements, George Company's commander, Capt Cooney, was mortally wounded. LtCol M. E. Roach Comments, 24 Jul 56.

Marine Dispositions Before CCF Attack

The units of Yudam-ni will be listed counter-clockwise, beginning with those on North Ridge, according to the positions they occupied around the perimeter on the night of 27–28 November. North Ridge, bounded on the east by the reservoir and on the west by the valley separating Northwest Ridge, lay closest to the village and was therefore of immediate tactical importance. Facing this hill mass from Yudam-ni, one sees four distinct terminal heights: Hill 1167 on the right, Hills 1240 and 1282 in the center, and the giant spur of Hill 1384 on the left. Companies D and E of the 7th Marines, occupied Hills 1240 and 1282 respectively. Since the combined front of these two units was a mile wide, they concentrated on their assigned hilltops and relied on periodic patrols to span the gaping, 500-yard saddle between. Although both flanks of each company dangled "in the air," they were backed by two-thirds of the 5th Marine Regiment in the valley of Yudam-ni.¹²

The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, had arrived from the east coast of the Chosin Reservoir at noon on the 27th, while the attacks to the west were in full progress. Lieutenant Colonel Taplett placed his unit in an assembly area at the base of North Ridge, beneath the large, unoccupied spur leading to Hill 1384. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, did not complete its move to Yudam-ni from the east side of the reservoir until after dark. Lieutenant Colonel John W. Stevens, II, secured for the night in the valley below Hills 1282 and 1240; and with Taplett's nearby command, 1/5 thus comprised a formidable reserve behind the thin high-ground defenses of Companies D and E of 2/7.

To the left of North Ridge, going round the clock, Company H of 3/7 dug in on the crest of Hill 1403, terminal height of Northwest Ridge. Farther to the left, in the broad draw through which Company F had earlier enveloped the CCF-held spur, Company E of 2/5 took up strong blocking positions. The latter unit was not tied in with the 7th Marines' troops on Hill 1403, there being a steep and rugged gap of about 200 yards on the intervening hillside. Easy Company's line extended up the left side of the draw and connected with Fox's on the northern tip of the newly won spur. Company F manned the remainder of that finger of high ground, its left flank overlooking the road separating Southwest Ridge.

¹² This section is derived from: 5thMar SAR, 19–20; 7thMar SAR, 21; 1/5 SAR, 11–12; 2/5 SAR, 15–18; 3/5 SAR, 13.

As mentioned before, Company D, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, occupied a finger of Southwest Ridge jutting out toward the road and directly opposite Fox Company's spur. To the left, but beyond physical contact, Companies G and I of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, defended the topographical crest of Southwest Ridge. As an example of altitudes and distances involved around the perimeter, the latter company, perched atop Hill 1426 (meters), sat 1200 feet above the valley floor at Yudam-ni¹³ and at a lineal distance of a mile and a half from the village. To its left rear, 2000 yards away on the same hill mass, Company A of 1/7 defended a terminal peak, Hill 1294, overlooking the broad valley separating South Ridge. A platoon of Company C, 1/7, was deployed on the valley floor to block that avenue into Marine artillery positions.

South Ridge, capped by a conical peak jutting 1600 feet skyward, points at Yudam-ni and the reservoir like a great arrowhead. Company B of 1/7, after returning from the active patrol mentioned earlier, entrenched on the tip, Hill 1276, to cover the deep gorge between South and Southeast Ridges. In this narrow ribbon of low ground, the MSR from Yudam-ni travels southward four miles before turning abruptly east into Toktong Pass. Company C of 1/7, less one platoon, occupied a spur of Southeast Ridge near the sharp turn—three miles from the Valley of Yudam-ni and five from the village itself.

Even farther out on a tactical limb was Fox Company of 2/7, which had departed Hagaru at noon on 27 November¹⁴ to take up hilltop positions in the center of Toktong Pass. Its mission, like that of Company C, was to guard the vulnerable MSR between Hagaru and Yudam-ni. But it was seven miles from the friendly perimeter at Hagaru on the one side and over two mountainous miles from Company C on the other. Fox Company, numerically and geographically, appeared to be fair game for some CCF regiment on the prowl—although appearances are sometimes deceiving.

This, then, was the disposition of the 5th and 7th Marines in the evening of 27 November: a total of ten understrength rifle companies of both regiments on the high ground around Yudam-ni; two battalions of the 5th in the valley near the village; and two rifle companies, Charlie and Fox, of the 7th in isolated positions along the 14-mile route to Hagaru.

¹³ Yudam-ni itself is 3500 feet above sea level.

¹⁴ Cpl D. R. Thornton interview by Capt A. Z. Freeman, 7 Mar 51.

The regimental command posts of Colonel Litzenberg and Lieutenant Colonel Murray were located at Yudam-ni along with the usual headquarters elements, except for the Antitank Company of the 7th Marines, at Hagaru. Also at Hagaru were Lieutenant Colonel Randolph S. D. Lockwood's headquarters of 2/7,¹⁶ and Weapons Company (-) of that battalion. For this reason, Companies D and E, on Hills 1240 and 1282 at Yudam-ni, came under temporary control of 1/7.

Despite the lack of tanks,¹⁶ the Yudam-ni perimeter encompassed an impressive array of Marine supporting arms. The 1st and 4th Battalions, together with Batteries G and I of the 3d, represented almost three-fourths of the fire power of the 11th Regiment. The 48 howitzers—thirty 105mm and eighteen 155mm—were emplaced in the expansive flats generally south of the village, in the direction of South and South-east Ridges. In position to the north were the 75mm recoilless rifles of the 5th Marines and the 4.2-inch mortar companies of both infantry regiments.

The Yudam-ni lines bristled with enough firepower to give any commander confidence, but the supply situation was not reassuring. Although Captain Robert A. Morehead and a detachment from the 1st Service Battalion arrived during the 27th to begin establishment of a division dump, the supply level was low. The dumps of the 5th and 7th Marines contained about 3 days' rations, 3 days' POL, and 2 U/F of small arms ammunition in addition to amounts in the hands of the troops. Very little artillery ammunition was available beyond that held by the firing batteries. During the 27th Colonel Litzenberg sent his S-4, Major Maurice E. Roach, to Hagaru to arrange for the dispatching of about five truckloads each of rations, POL, and ammunition. They arrived late on the evening of the same day—the last supplies to get through from Hagaru. That same evening Lieutenant Colonel Beall, commanding officer of the 1st Motor Transport Battalion, led all the organic vehicles (except 40-50) of the 5th and 7th Marines back to Hagaru with the intent of returning them the following day loaded. The Chinese, who had already invested the road, for some reason permitted the trucks to pass. Beall reached Hagaru without incident. The trucks were never able to return.¹⁷

¹⁶ LtCol Lockwood had relieved Maj Sawyer as CO 2/7 on 5 Nov.

¹⁷ Four M-4 tanks of the Provisional Tank Platoon had attempted to come through from Hagaru but gave up the attempt when all slid off the road. Later on the 27th one M-26 succeeded in completing the trip, but the Chinese cut the road before the others could follow. 1stTkBn, SAR, 21.

¹⁷ 7thMar SAR, 42-43; 5thMar SAR, 45-50; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex FF (1stServBn); 1stMTBn SAR, 9; Roach Comments, 24 Jul 56.

The Battle of Northwest Ridge

At 1830, two hours after the looming mass of Sakkat Mountain had blotted out the sun on 27 November, Yudam-ni was pitch black. The temperature dropped to 20 degrees below zero.¹⁸

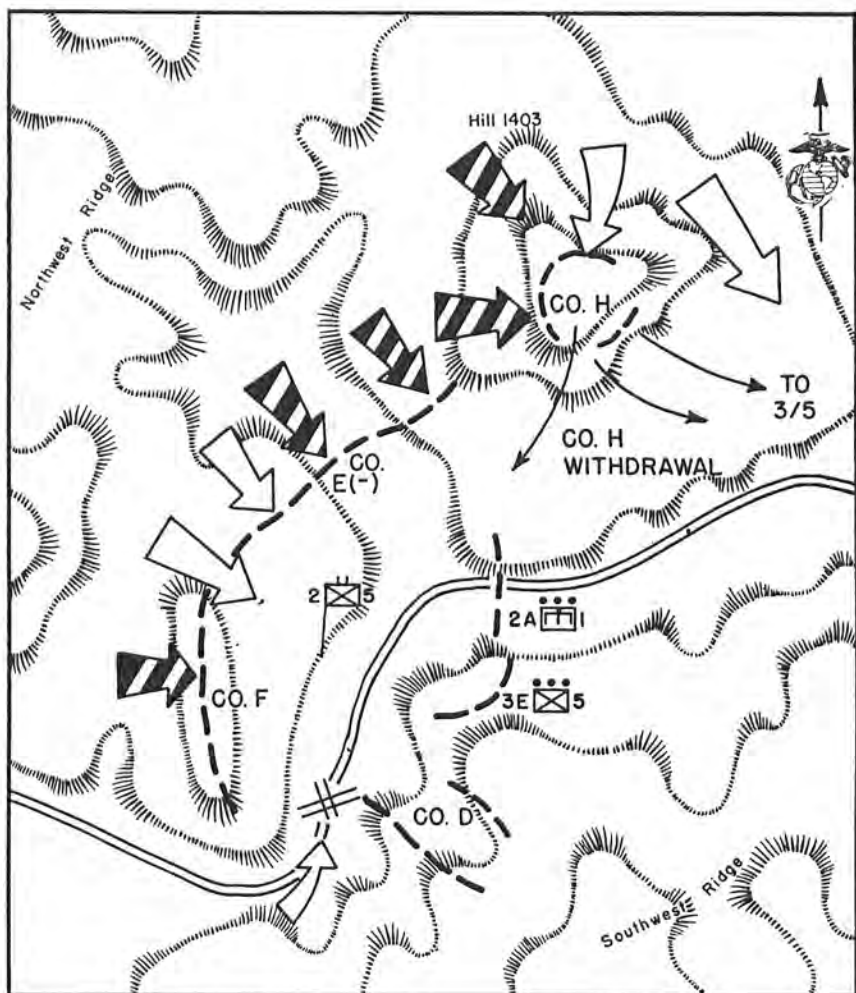
On Northwest Ridge the infantrymen of 3/7 and 2/5 slowly grew numb from the penetrating cold. Trigger fingers, though heavily gloved, ached against the brittle steel of weapons, and parka hoods became encrusted with frozen moisture. In the cumbersome shoe-pacs, perspiration-soaked feet gradually became transformed into lumps of biting pain.

When men are immobilized for hours in such temperatures, no amount of clothing will keep them warm. Yet, even more disturbing to the Marines on the Yudam-ni perimeter was the effect of the weather on carbines and BARs. These weapons froze to such a degree that they became unreliable or, in some cases, completely unserviceable. The M-1 rifle and Browning machine guns showed stubborn streaks but retained their effectiveness, provided they had been cared for properly.

While the Marines sat in their holes and cursed the frigid night, the quiet hills around them came alive with thousands of Red Chinese on the march. Unseen and unheard, the endless columns of quilted green wound through valleys and over mountain trails leading toward the southern tips of North and Northwest Ridges. These were the assault battalions of the 79th and 89th CCF Divisions. With seven other divisions they comprised Red China's 9th Army Group led by Sung Shin-lun, one of the best field commanders in the CCF. Lin Pao, commanding the 3d Field Army, had dispatched Sung's army group to northeast Korea specifically to destroy the 1st Marine Division. The knockout blow, aimed at the northwest arc of the Yudam-ni perimeter, amounted to a massive frontal assault. Another CCF division, the 59th, had completed a wide envelopment to the south, driving in toward South Ridge and Toktong Pass to cut the MSR between Hagaru and Yudam-ni.¹⁹

¹⁸ Unless otherwise noted, this section is derived from 7thMar SAR, 21, n. p.; RCT 7 URpt 5; 2/5 SAR, 17-18; 2/5 HD Nov 50, 9; CO 7thMar msgs to CG 1stMarDiv, 2253 27 Nov 50, 1000 and 1250 28 Nov 50; Capt Samuel Jaskilka, "Easy Alley," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxv, no. 5 (May 51), 15-18; Maj S. Jaskilka Comments, n. d.

¹⁹ 1stMarDiv SAR, 31-32; G-2 SAR, 15, 30-31; CCF Army Histories, 13, 21.



THE BATTLE OF NORTHWEST RIDGE

1st CCF Attacks



2nd



MAP-14

This was the main effort of the CCF in northeast Korea: three divisions against two regiments of Marines. And in addition to the advantage of mass, the Reds held the trump cards of mobility and surprise. They enjoyed superior mobility because they were unencumbered by heavy weapons and hence could use primitive routes of approach in the darkness. They had the advantage of surprise because their practice of marching by night and hiding by day had concealed their approach to a large degree from UN air observation. To offset these odds, the outnumbered Marines would have to rely on superior firepower, command of the air, and another weapon called *esprit*.

By 2100, Northwest Ridge was crawling with Chinese only a few hundred yards from the positions of Companies E and F, 5th Marines, and Company H, 7th Marines. The enemy troops, padding silently in their rubber sneakers, had as yet given no hint of their presence. To divert attention, the Red commander sent a patrol against 2/5's roadblock on the MSR between Northwest and Southwest Ridges. Troops of Company D, 5th Marines, exchanged grenades with the Chinese and killed two of them. The remainder they quickly dispersed with mortar fire.

Simultaneously with the thrust at the roadblock, small enemy teams probed Fox Company's line on the spur of Northwest Ridge, vanishing into the night after each light contact. These disturbances in the center of 2/5's zone enabled CCF infiltrators and grenadiers on the northern tip of the spur to crawl undetected within a few yards of the limiting point between Company F and Company E on the right. Bugle calls cut through the darkness, and the grenadiers began heaving their missiles while the submachine gunners opened up. The din of this first attempt to unnerve the defenders lasted several minutes. Then came a sustained mortar bombardment of Marine front lines. While the shells rained down, the Chinese opened fire with crew-served automatic weapons emplaced all across Northwest Ridge.

At 2125 the mortar eruptions began to walk toward the Marine rear. Whistles screeched, enemy machine guns fell silent, and the first Chinese assault waves hurled themselves against the juncture of Companies E and F. The enemy attacked on an extremely narrow front in order to maintain control. His troops advanced in column within grenade range, then deployed abruptly into skirmish lines that flailed the Marine positions ceaselessly and without regard to losses.

The machine guns and rifles of Companies E and F piled the attackers in grotesque heaps up and down the front, but the pressure of human

tonnage was unremitting. Ultimately, the Reds broke through on the northern tip of the spur, where the two units were joined. They poured troops into the gap, and as they attempted to roll back the newly exposed flanks, they overran part of Fox Company's right wing platoon. Captain Samuel Jaskilka, commanding Easy Company in the draw, dispatched a light machine-gun section and a squad from his 3d Platoon (deployed in the rear) to reinforce his 1st Platoon at the edge of the breakthrough. The latter unit, under Second Lieutenant Jack L. Nolan, held firm and bent back its left to prevent encroachment on the rear. Staff Sergeant Russell J. Borgomainero, of the 1st Platoon, deployed the reinforcements to contain the penetration, while 2/5's 81mm mortars laid barrages on the salient.

At 2215, as the attack against Companies E and F was reaching its height, Lieutenant Colonel Roise ordered H&S Company of 2/5 to deploy for the immediate defense of his command post. The Chinese, blocked in their attempts to get behind Easy Company, continued to stab at the rear of Fox. If their envelopment succeeded, they could swarm over the headquarters and supporting arms positions of the 2d Battalion.

Roise's precaution proved unnecessary. As fast as the Red commander sent troops into the salient, they were cut down by mortar, machine-gun, and rifle fire. The few who did worm their way into Marine supporting positions died in individual combat. At 2230, on the right of Company E's front, the 2d Platoon turned its machine guns on a native hut 200 yards up the draw and set it ablaze. The brilliant illumination exposed all CCF troops in the narrow corridor and on the adjoining slopes; and the Marines commenced a turkey shoot that ended at 2400 with the virtual annihilation of the main enemy force.

The Chinese maintained their grip on the northern tip of the spur, however, and fought off patrols from Easy Company trying to re-establish contact with Fox. Since the gap remained, leaving the enemy in position to fire on the Marine rear, Roise shifted the reserve platoon of Company D to Fox Company's side of the salient. This redeployment, in conjunction with Company E's earlier action on the other side, converted the penetration area into a gantlet for the Chinese. Already weakened by casualties numbering in the hundreds, the Red commander apparently wrote off the salient as a net loss, for he never used it again.

Chinese Seize Hill 1403

At 2135, just as the first assault waves were pounding 2/5's front, the vanguard of another enemy force began to feel out the lines of Company H, 3/7, on Hill 1403 to the north. Captain Cooke's three platoons were deployed in an arc from the road to the peak of the hill to protect the line of communication to the valley of Yudam-ni. Out of physical contact with all friendly elements, How Company was assailable from every direction, as the Chinese quickly discovered.²⁰

Following a half hour of lightning probes, the enemy launched a strong attack against First Lieutenant Elmer A. Krieg's platoon on the right front. Communications with Cooke's CP went out almost immediately, and in the space of a few minutes the Marine right flank collapsed under the weight of CCF numbers. Krieg shifted his remaining men to the left and joined Second Lieutenant Paul E. Denny's platoon.

At the company CP on the reverse slope, Captain Cooke and his forward observers radioed for all available supporting arms. The prompt barrages by artillery and mortars in the valley stopped the Communists on the right half of the summit and enabled Cooke to reorganize his forward platoons. As the supporting fires lifted, he personally led an assault to restore the right flank. But the CCF machine guns and grenades smashed the counterattack, and Cooke was cut down at the head of his men.

Second Lieutenant James M. Mitchell, executive officer, temporarily took command of Company H. When word of Cooke's death reached 3/7's CP, Lieutenant Colonel William F. Harris²¹ dispatched Lieutenant Harris (no relation), recently returned to duty after illness, to take over the beleaguered unit.

The younger Harris, who had been out of action since shortly after the "How Hill" battle in early November, safely ascended the enemy-infested slopes of Hill 1403 in the darkness. About midnight he reached How Company's positions and found all of Cooke's officers wounded but one, Lieutenant Newton. The platoons of Krieg and Denny were badly depleted, but Harris moved Newton's platoon from the left

²⁰ Unless otherwise stated the sources for this section are: 7thMar SAR; RCT 7 URpt 6; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; 2/5 HD, Nov 50, 9-10; 2/5 SAR, 18-19; CO 7thMar msgs to CG 1stMarDiv, 0810 and 1000 28 Nov 50; Jaskilka, "Easy Alley," 18-19; Capt M. P. Newton Comments, n. d.

²¹ LtCol Harris, son of MajGen Field Harris, had relieved Maj Roach on 11 Nov.

flank to the right. Newton's men regained enough ground in a counter-attack to cement the company's position.

After these first attacks against 2/5 and H/7 over the two-mile breadth of Northwest Ridge, the Chinese remained generally inactive for a period of about two hours. They had paid heavily for minor gains—so heavily that fresh battalions were called from reserve to stamp out the Marine resistance on the tip of the ridge. And at 0300, several hundred CCF riflemen, grenadiers, and submachine gunners commenced the second general assault, striking at 2/5 and Company H simultaneously.

In the low ground at the center of the two-mile front, Jaskilka's Easy Company threw a curtain of machine-gun fire across the draw in the path of 300 Chinese advancing frontally. The first enemy ranks marched into the fire lanes and were mowed down like rows of grain. The CCF soldiers in subsequent formations apparently viewed the grisly, corpse-strewn corridor with misgivings, for they stopped several hundred yards up the narrow valley and took cover. Thereafter, the main fighting in Company E's zone involved long-range exchanges of machine-gun and mortar fire, although clashes at close quarters occasionally flared up on the flanks.

Approximately 200 Communist troops had concentrated meanwhile against Fox Company on the spur to the left, where the ground afforded more cover and space for maneuver. Stumbling over a carpet of their own dead, the Reds thrust repeatedly at the center of the Marine line. They inflicted many casualties on the defenders and ultimately overran two machine-gun positions. But this was the sum total of their success; and fighting on the north half of the spur, at the edge of the gap between Companies E and F, continued sporadically for the rest of the night with neither side gaining any appreciable advantage.

On the right of the 2d Battalion, the second CCF onslaught had struck the front and both flanks of Company H on Hill 1403. Human cannon fodder of Red China was hurled against the Marine positions for a full hour, but Lieutenant Harris' command held. H Company's roadblock, commanded by Sergeant Vick, decisively beat off a Chinese attack in the valley; and at 0400 Lieutenant Colonel Harris ordered the hard pressed company to pull back toward the rear of Easy Company, 2/5. Two hours later How Company completed its fighting withdrawal.

The loss of Hill 1403 posed a grave threat to the whole defensive network around the village. Not only were the Chinese now ideally

situated to strike at the rear of 2/5 and sever it from the two regiments, but in sufficient strength they could attack the rear and flanks of the Marine units on North and Southwest Ridges. Moreover, at dawn, they would be looking down the throats of some 2000 Marines on the valley floor.

Fighting at 3/5's CP

The partially successful assault on Northwest Ridge involved two regiments, the 266th and 267th, of the 89th CCF Division. Operating abreast of this force, the 79th Division had meanwhile advanced over the rugged spine of North Ridge toward the two isolated companies of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, occupying terminal Hills 1282 and 1240 of that huge land mass. Elements of the 79th Division's three regiments were in the fore, and each regiment was apparently disposed in a column of battalions. Facing south toward the Marine positions on North Ridge, the CCF order of battle, with probable objectives assigned, was as follows:

237th Regt	235th Regt	236th Regt
Hill 1384	Hill 1240	Hill 1167
(Unoccupied)	(D/7)	(Unoccupied)

For reasons unknown, the commander of the 235th Regiment did not include Hill 1282 in his plan for seizing the high ground above Yudam-ni. He ordered his 1st Battalion to take only Hill 1240, and the commanding officer of that unit in turn assigned the mission to his 1st and Special Duty Companies. After these two outfits had seized the objective, the 2d and 3d Companies would pass through and, in conjunction with other CCF forces in the locale, ". . . annihilate the enemy at Yudam-ni."²²

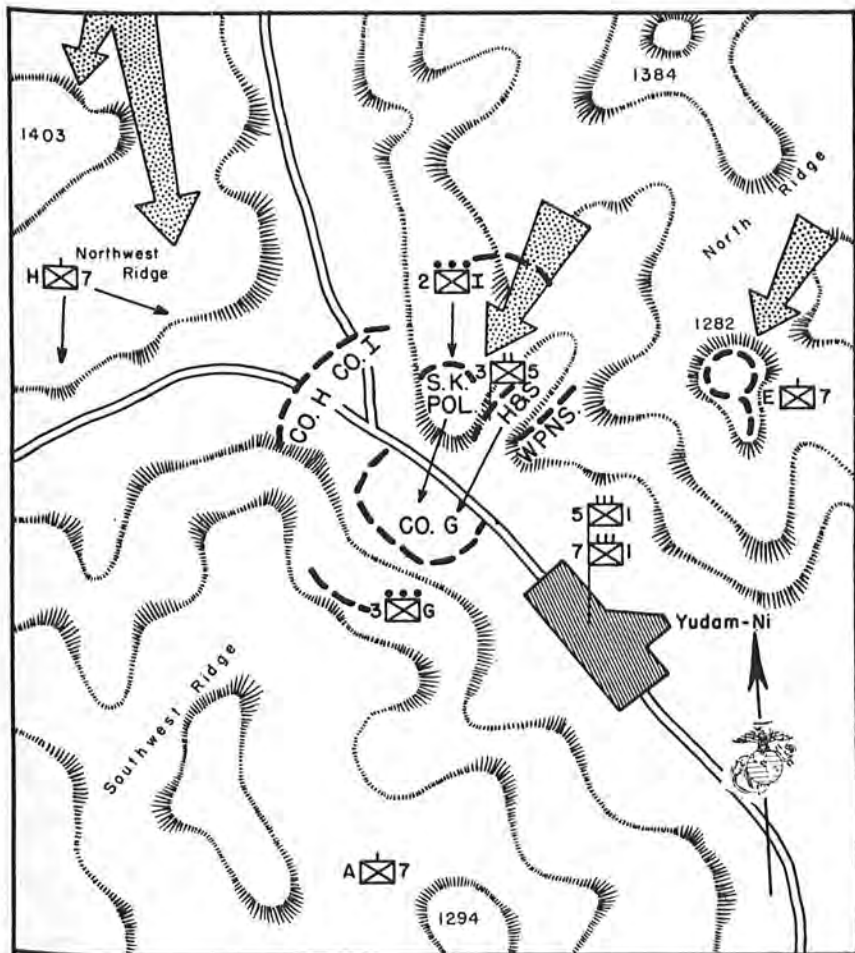
²² ATIS, *Enemy Documents: Korean Operations*, Issue 84, 38. Except where otherwise noted, this section is based on: *Ibid.*, 26-43; LtCol R. D. Taplett interv, 3 May 56; 1stLt R. T. Bey ltr to Maj A. C. Geer, 26 Jun 52; RCT 7 URpt 5; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMar Div, 1000 28 Nov 50; 7thMar SAR, 21; CO 5thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0730 28 Nov 50; 3/5 SAR, 13-14; Hull Comments; Capt J. H. Cahill ltr, 3 Jul 56. The ATIS translation contains a number of detailed and apparently accurate critiques of small unit actions. An earlier translation is to be found in ATIS, *Enemy Documents: Korean Operations*, Issue 66, 87-134.

Approaching the terminal high ground in darkness, the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, veered off its course and mistakenly ascended a spur toward Hill 1282. The 3d Battalion, 236th Regiment, keeping contact as it advanced on the left, participated in the error and wound up at the foot of Hill 1240. Thus confronted with this precipitous mass instead of low, gently sloping Hill 1167, the 3d Battalion floundered for several hours and did not take part in the first attack against the Marine perimeter. It did, however, send out the usual screen of infiltrators.


At 2200, submachine gunners and grenadiers of the 1st and Special Duty Companies, 1/235, commenced the preliminaries against Company E, 7th Marines on Hill 1282, believing they were engaging a Marine platoon on Hill 1240. The harassing force was driven off after failing to disrupt the Marine defenses. Almost two hours later, at 2345, Company D of 2/7 reported enemy infiltration on Hill 1240 a thousand yards to the east. Both Marine companies cancelled the patrols scheduled for the long saddle connecting their positions and went on a 100% alert.

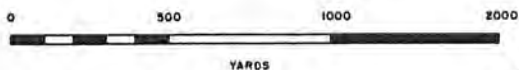
Captain Phillips, commanding Easy Company, had arranged two platoons in perimeter around the summit of Hill 1282, and the third he had deployed to the right rear, on a spur that dipped toward Yudamni. At midnight, after a period of silence across the company front, the initial CCF assault wave slammed into the northeastern arc of the perimeter, manned by First Lieutenant Yancey's platoon. Marine firepower blunted this frontal attack, and the Reds tried to slip around the east side of the hilltop. They ran head-on into First Lieutenant Bey's platoon entrenched on the spur and were thrown back.

Resorting to grinding tactics, the Chinese repeatedly assaulted Company E's position from midnight to 0200. Whistles and bugles blared over the reaches of North Ridge, and the charging squads of infantry met death stoically, to the tune of weird Oriental chants. When one formation was cut to pieces by machine-gun fire and grenades, another rose out of the night to take its place. By 0200, as the first attack began to taper off, the northeastern slopes of Hill 1282 lay buried under a mat of human wreckage. An hour later, the 1st and Special Duty Companies of the 1st Battalion, 235th CCF Regiment, had ceased to exist, having lost nearly every man of their combined total of over 200. Company E's casualties had been heavy, but the Marines still held Hill 1282.



ACTION AT 3/5'S CP

CCF Attacks 



MAP-15

On Hill 1240, a thousand yards to the east, infiltrators of the 3d Battalion, 236th CCF Regiment, probed Dog Company's perimeter while Easy was under attack. By 0030, some of the harassing parties had sidestepped through the saddle separating Hill 1282 and opened fire on the 5th and 7th Regimental headquarters in Yudam-ni.

The sniping from the slopes of North Ridge did not surprise the Marines in the valley, for they had long been preparing for a possible threat from that direction. Early in the evening, Lieutenant Colonel Taplett had re-deployed 3/5 from an assembly area just north of the village to a broad tactical perimeter in the same locale. Companies H and I, the latter on the right, he positioned facing Northwest Ridge—specifically Hill 1403. Two platoons of Company G held blocking positions near the base of Southwest Ridge, and the third manned an outpost on the slopes of that high ground. At the bottom of North Ridge, in the draw between Hill 1282 and the spur of 1384, Taplett established his CP with H&S and Weapons Companies providing local security.

When 3/5's commander learned that the spur of Hill 1384 was unoccupied, he dispatched a platoon of Company I to an outpost position 500 yards up the slope. About 300 yards behind the Item Company unit, on a portion of the spur directly above the battalion CP, a platoon of South Korean police deployed with two heavy machine guns.

At 2045, fifteen minutes before any other unit on the Yudam-ni reported a contact, the outpost platoon of Item Company began receiving fire from above. This harassment, probably involving advance elements of the 237th CCF Regiment, continued sporadically for several hours, throughout the period of the first Communist attacks against other fronts.

In the valley at 2120, a few men of How Company, 7th Marines, entered 3/5's positions barefooted and partially clothed. Taplett, personally noting the time of their arrival, questioned them in the battalion aid station, and they told how their 60mm mortar position on Hill 1403 had been seized by the Chinese.²³

The battalion commander returned to his CP, and after listening to the far-off din of the initial Communist attacks, placed his perimeter on a 100% alert at 0115. Half an hour later, the Item Company platoon on the spur of Hill 1384 reported an increase in enemy fire coming

²³ MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 20 Jul 56.

from above. A message from H/7 next warned that CCF troops were moving around Hill 1403 to cut the MSR. Company I observed activity in that quarter shortly afterwards, and at 0218 opened fire on an enemy platoon, which promptly retracted.

A few minutes later, a company—possibly two companies—of Chinese swept down the spur of Hill 1384, overran the Item Company platoon outpost, and continued on towards the police platoon. The South Koreans, after inflicting heavy casualties on the Reds with their two machine guns, vacated the high ground. Enemy troops then spread out along the crest and poured plunging fire into H&S and Weapons Companies defending the draw.

Weapons Company, on the far side of the depression, held its ground, but H&S, directly under the gun, shortly fell back across the MSR. Taplett's CP was left in a no man's land, with enemy bullets raining down out of the night and Marine fire whistling back from across the draw and road. Upon learning of the withdrawal, the battalion commander elected to remain in the tent in order to keep telephone contact with his rifle companies, which were as yet uninvolved. He did not consider the situation too serious, and it seemed as though the police platoon's machine guns had taken the sting out of the enemy assault.

Except for a few individuals, the Chinese did not descend from the spur. Nor did they direct much fire at Taplett's blackout tent, which they probably took to be unoccupied. Inside, the battalion commander studied his maps, received reports and issued instructions over the field phone while his S-3, Major Thomas A. Durham, sat nearby with pistol drawn. Major John J. Canney, the executive officer, left the CP to retrieve H&S Company and was killed as he approached the MSR. Private First Class Louis W. Swinson, radio operator, whose instrument had proved unreliable in the severe cold, took position outside the tent and covered the approaches with his rifle. This unique situation—a battalion commander under fire in an exposed position while his rifle companies lay peacefully entrenched several hundred yards away—lasted for over an hour.

The Battle of North Ridge

At approximately 0300, when Taplett, Durham, and Swinson began their lonely vigil, the 79th CCF Division launched another assault on

North Ridge (see Map 16).²⁴ As a result of the enemy's first attack, and in anticipation of the second, Colonel Murray earlier had moved elements of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, into position behind 3/5.

Second Lieutenant Nicholas M. Trapnell's 1st Platoon of Company A left the battalion assembly area in the valley at 0100 and started up the steep incline of Hill 1282. Climbing the icy slopes by day was difficult enough, but darkness and a minus-20-degree temperature made it a gruelling and perilous ordeal. Trapnell's outfit did not reach the crest until after 0300, when the CCF assault was at the height of its fury and Company E was facing imminent annihilation. The Able Company unit moved into position with Lieutenant Bey's platoon on the spur jutting back from the peak. As yet, the full force of the Chinese drive had not spread to this area.

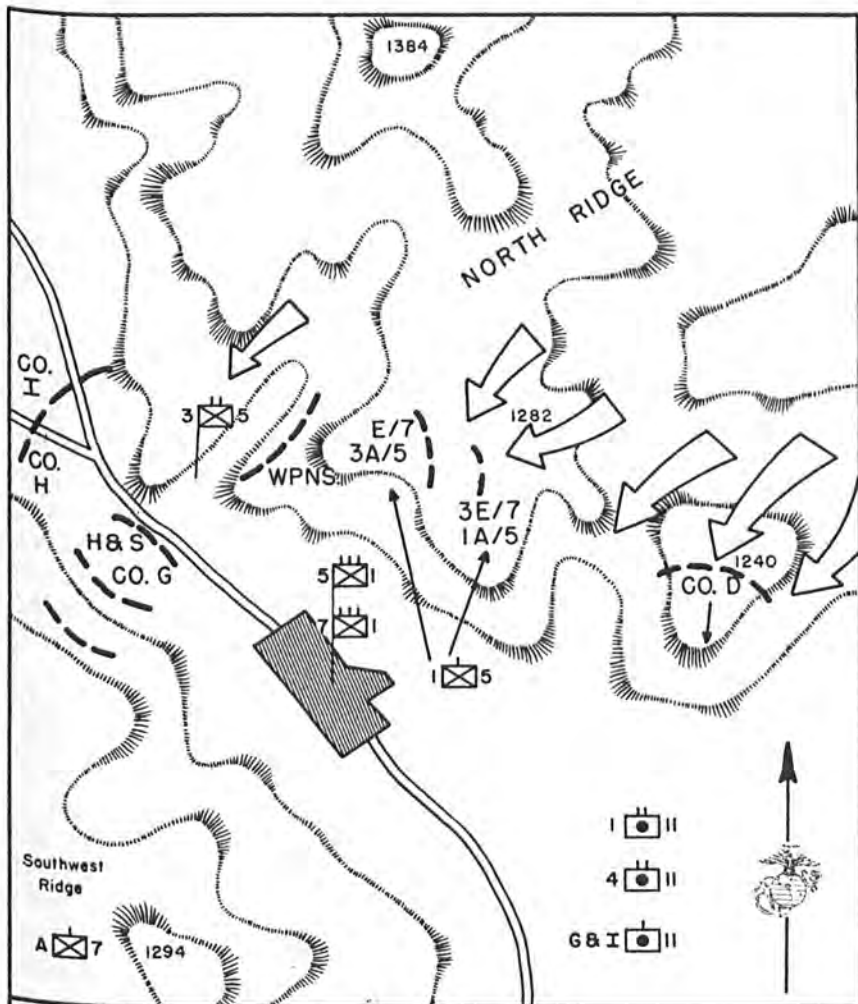
The Red commander of the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, used his 3d Company for the second attack against the cap of Hill 1282. With the few survivors of the 1st and Special Duty Companies attached, the fresh unit probably numbered about 125 troops. In squads of eight to ten, the Chinese struck again and again at the perimeter on the summit, and the two depleted platoons of Easy Company dwindled to a mere handful of tired, desperate Marines. First Lieutenant Robert E. Snyder's 3d Platoon of A/5, having been sent up from the valley shortly after Trapnell's outfit, arrived as reinforcements. Snyder did not have contact with Bey and Trapnell, whose platoons were still intact, so he integrated his men with the remnants of the two platoons on the peak.

Both sides suffered crippling losses during the close fighting on Hill 1282. The Reds finally drove a wedge between the Marine defenders on the summit and the platoons of Bey and Trapnell on the spur. According to Bey:

It soon became obvious that a penetration had been made to our left. The positions atop the hill and the Command Post area were brightly illuminated by flares and other explosions. By this time [approximately 0400] nothing but Chinese could be heard on the telephone in the command post and my Platoon Sergeant, Staff Sergeant Daniel M. Murphy, requested permission to take what men we could spare in an attempt to close the gap between the left flank of the platoon and the rest of the company. I told him to go ahead and do what he could.²⁵

²⁴ Unless otherwise noted, this section is derived from: 1/5 SAR, 12-13; 1/5 HD, Nov 50; 7thMar SAR, 21; 7thMar URpt 5; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1000 28 Nov 50; Murray Comments; Hull Comments; Cdr J. H. Craven Comments, 24 Aug 56; Maj W. E. Kerrigan ltr, 7 Sep 56; Bey ltr, 26 Jun 52; Capt E. E. Collins Comments, 19 Jun 56; 1stLt R. E. Snyder Comments, 15 Sep 56.

²⁵ Bey ltr, 26 Jun 52.



THE BATTLE OF NORTH RIDGE



MAP-16

Meanwhile, the center and rear of Easy Company's perimeter was reduced to the chaos of a last stand. Yancey, already wounded, was hit again as he tried to reorganize the few Marine survivors on the peak. First Lieutenant Leonard M. Clements, the other platoon leader, fell wounded as did First Lieutenant William J. Schreier of the mortar section and Lieutenant Snyder. Captain Phillips, hurling grenades in the midst of the melee, was killed. His executive officer, First Lieutenant Raymond O. Ball, took command of Company E, shouting out encouragement as he lay immobilized by two wounds. He was hit several more times before he lapsed into unconsciousness and died after reaching the aid station. Lieutenant Snyder took command.

By 0500, CCF infantrymen of the 3d Company, 1/235, occupied the summit of Hill 1282, still believing it to be Hill 1240. The remnants of the platoons of Yancey, Clements, and Snyder had been driven to the reverse slope in the west, while the units of Trapnell and Bey clung to the crest of the southeastern spur, overlooking Yudam-ni. Up to this point, Chinese casualties on Hill 1282 probably numbered about 250, with Marine losses approximating 150. Easy Company had been reduced to the effective strength of a rifle platoon (split in two), and the pair of A/5 platoons paid with upwards of 40 killed and wounded during the brief time on the battle line; only six effectives remained of Snyder's platoon.

The danger from enemy-held Hill 1282 was compounded by the success of the 3d Battalion, 236th Regiment on Hill 1240 to the east. At about 0105 the Chinese who had previously been content only to make probing attacks on Captain Hull's Dog Company shifted to a full-scale assault. Sergeant Othmar J. Reller's platoon, holding the northwest portion of the company perimeter, beat off three attacks before being overrun at about 0230. First Lieutenant Richard C. Webber, the machine gun platoon leader, attempted to plug the gap with the available reinforcements but was prevented by a fire fight outside the Company CP. First Lieutenant Edward M. Seeburger's platoon holding the perimeter on the right (east) was under too heavy an attack to extend to the left and tie in with Webber. The Chinese overran Hull's CP at about 0300, and he ordered Seeburger and First Lieutenant Anthony J. Sota, commanding the rear platoon, to reorganize at the foot of Hill 1240.

Captain Hull, wounded, his command cut to the size of a few squads, rallied his troops on the hillside and led a counterattack against the

crest. The surprised Chinese recoiled and the Marines won a small foothold. Then the enemy smashed back from the front, right flank, and right rear. Hull was wounded again but continued in action as his hasty perimeter diminished to the proportions of a squad position. With the approach of dawn, he had only 16 men left who could fight. The enemy was on the higher ground to his front, on both flanks, and on the slopes in his rear.

CHAPTER IX

Fox Hill

Encirclement of Company C of RCT-7—Fox Company at Tok-tong Pass—Marine Counterattacks on North Ridge—Deadlock on Hill 1240—The Fight for Northwest Ridge—Second Night's Attacks on Fox Hill—Not Enough Tents for Casualties—The Turning Point of 30 November

OF THE MARINE artillery units at Yudam-ni, those most directly imperiled by CCF gains on North Ridge were Major Parry's 3d Battalion and Battery K of the 4th. The latter, under First Lieutenant Robert C. Messman, lay beneath the southeastern spur of Hill 1282, having gone into position at 2100 on 27 November. Rearward of King Battery, 3/11 was positioned below the steep slopes of Hill 1240 where its 105s had fired in direct support of the 7th Marines on 26 and 27 November (see Map 12).¹

The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, which had arrived at Yudam-ni early on the 27th to support the 5th Regiment, was emplaced in the valley between the tips of South and Southwest Ridges. Major William McReynolds, commanding the 4th Battalion, reached the perimeter with his outfit later. He had two batteries in action by 1900 and all three by 2300 on the low ground separating South and Southeast Ridges. Battery K, firing under the direction of 1/11 pending the arrival of the parent unit, then reverted to McReynolds' control, although it did not displace rearward to 4/11's positions until the next day.

The TD-14 bulldozers of the 11th Marines had proved to be no match for the eight-inch frostline around the Reservoir, with the result that all batteries and security positions sat fully exposed on the concrete-

¹ 3/11 SAR, 6; 1stMarDiv SAR, annex SS, appendix 4, (hereafter 4/11 SAR), 5.

like flatlands. Incoming mortar fire harassed the artillerymen throughout the day of 27 November, and after dark CCF flat trajectory weapons stepped up the tempo of bombardment. Marine casualties in the valley were light, however, for the enemy gunners seemed unable to group their erratic pot shots into effective barrages.²

It was the imminent threat of Communist infantry attack from North Ridge that weighed down on the artillerymen of the 11th Regiment during the predawn hours of 28 November. Since the beginning of the CCF onslaught, they had been firing their howitzers almost ceaselessly in a 180-degree arc, and ammunition stocks were fast dwindling to a critical level. Their gun flashes providing brilliant targets for enemy infiltrators, they could reasonably expect a full-scale assault in the event of the dislodgment of Easy and Dog Companies from Hills 1282 and 1240. The effect of countermoves by Colonels Litzenberg and Murray would not be known until after dawn, and meanwhile the Marine gunners kept on firing their howitzers while the black outline of North Ridge loomed ever more menacing.

Encirclement of Company C of RCT-7

While the 79th and 89th CCF Divisions pounded the northwest arc of the Yudam-ni perimeter during the night of 27–28 November, the 59th completed its wide end-sweep to the southeast and moved against the 14-mile stretch of road to Hagaru. At the moment the Communist effort in that quarter could be considered a secondary attack, but if ever a target fulfilled all the qualifications of a prime objective, it was this critical link in the MSR—the very lifeline to most of the 1st Marine Division's infantry and artillery strength.

During the 27th Captain Wilcox's Baker Company of the 7th Marines patrolled along South Ridge. As darkness fell, it was heavily engaged and incumbered with a number of litter casualties. With the permission of the regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel Davis led Captain John F. Morris's Charlie Company (-) down the MSR to positions across the road from Hill 1419. Aided by Charlie Company, Baker was then able to withdraw and return to Yudam-ni with Davis while Morris and his reduced company took up positions on Hill 1419.³

He deployed his two rifle platoons and 60mm mortar section in a

² 1/11 SAR, 8; 4/11 SAR, 5; LtCol W. McReynolds interv, 26 Nov 56.

³ Col R. G. Davis Comments, 30 Nov 56.

crescent on the lower slopes of the eastern spur, facing the distant crest. At 0230, five hours after Yudam-ni came under attack, a CCF force descended from the high ground and struck the right flank.⁴

After overrunning part of First Lieutenant Jack A. Chabek's platoon and inflicting heavy casualties, the Reds lashed out at the left flank of the crescent-shaped defense. Here Staff Sergeant Earle J. Payne's platoon, less one squad in an outpost on higher ground, bent under the weight of the attack and was soon in danger of being driven out of position. Captain Morris reinforced the platoons on each flank with men from his headquarters and the mortar section. The reshuffling was accomplished in the nick of time and just barely tipped the scales in favor of the defenders. A seesaw battle raged until after dawn on the 28th when, with the help of artillery fire from Yudam-ni, the Marines drove the Chinese back into the hills.

Although the critical pressure eased at daybreak, Company C remained pinned down by enemy fire coming from every direction, including the crest of Hill 1419 directly above. The Chinese were in absolute control of the MSR to the south, toward Toktong Pass, and to the north, in the direction of Yudam-ni. Morris had taken about 40 casualties—a dangerously high proportion, since he had only two of his three rifle platoons. His radio had been knocked out by enemy bullets, and the 60mm mortar section was left with but a few rounds of ammunition. For want of communication, he could get no help from the Marine Corsairs on station overhead.

The outpost squad from Payne's platoon could not be contacted in its position on the higher slopes of Hill 1419. Corporal Curtis J. Kiesling, who volunteered to search for the lost unit, was killed by CCF machine-gun fire as he attempted to scale the rugged incline. Other men of Company C repeatedly exposed themselves in order to drag wounded comrades to the relative safety of a draw leading down to the MSR.

Surrounded and outnumbered, Morris had no alternative but to await help from Yudam-ni. He contracted his perimeter on the hillside east of the road, and from this tiny tactical island, for the rest of the morning, his men watched Communist troops jockey for position around a 360-degree circle.

⁴ The following section, unless otherwise noted, is derived from: Geer, *The New Breed*, 288–290; Lynn Montross, "Ridgerunners of Toktong Pass," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvii, no. 5 (May 53), 16–23; 7thMar ISUM 67; and 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1000 28 Nov 50.

Fox Company at Toktong Pass

Where Morris had taken a reduced infantry company into its lonely assignment on the MSR, Captain William E. Barber went into position at Toktong Pass on the 27th with a heavily reinforced outfit.⁵ His Fox Company of 2/7, augmented by heavy machine gun and 81mm mortar sections of Weapons Company, numbered 240 officers and men. At the midway point of the pass, Barber chose an isolated hill just north of the MSR for his company perimeter. He placed the 3d Platoon (First Lieutenant Robert C. McCarthy) on the summit, facing generally north, with the 1st (First Lieutenant John M. Dunne) on the right and the 2d (First Lieutenant Elmer G. Peterson) on the left. The 3d Platoon formed a hilltop perimeter with two squads forward and the third in reserve to the rear. Tied in on each flank, the 1st and 2d Platoons stretched down the respective hillsides and bent back toward the MSR. These two were connected on the reverse slope by company headquarters and the rocket squad. Just below, at the base of the hill next to the road, were Barber's CP together with the 81mm and 60mm mortar sections. All machine guns, including the heavies from Weapons Company, were emplaced with the rifle platoons.

During the first half of the night of 27–28 November, Toktong Pass rumbled with the reverberations of truck convoys—the final serials of 1/5 and 4/11 outbound for Yudam-ni and Lieutenant Colonel Beall's empty trucks inbound for Hagaru. It was after 2000 before the last trucks climbed to the summit, then nosed downhill, whining and roaring through the night as they made the twisting descent. Chinese Communists had already launched their first attacks against Southwest Ridge at Yudam-ni, but Fox Company's perimeter remained quiet, even during the first hour of 28 November.

It was actually too quiet at 0115 when Lieutenant McCarthy inspected the 3d Platoon positions atop Fox Hill, now glittering in the light of a full moon. Finding his men numbed by the severe cold, he called together his squad leaders and admonished them to be more alert.

⁵ The following section, unless otherwise noted, is derived from Capt R. C. McCarthy, "Fox Hill," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvii, no. 3 (Mar 53), 16–23; Montross, "Ridge-runners of Toktong Pass," 16–23; 7thMar SAR, 20–21; 7thMar URpt 5; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1000 28 Nov 50; Cpl D. R. Thornton interv by Capt A. Z. Freeman, 3 Jul 51; 1stLt C. C. Dana and SSgt R. R. Danford interv by Capt Freeman, 4 Jul 51.

A short time later, during his next inspection, McCarthy heard the proper challenges ring out at every point.

There was no lack of watchfulness at 0230. For it was then that Chinese in estimated company strength lunged out of the night and assaulted the north, west, and south arcs of Company F's perimeter. On the summit, the two forward squads of McCarthy's platoon were overwhelmed almost immediately, losing 15 killed and nine wounded out of a total of 35 men. Three others would later be listed as missing. The eight uninjured fell back to the reserve squad's position on the military crest to the rear, and the enemy took over the topographical peak.

Fighting with small arms and grenades also raged on the hillside to the left, where the Chinese attempted to drive a wedge between the 2d and 3d Platoons. Repeated assaults were hurled back with grievous losses to the Reds, and they apparently threw in fresh units in their bid for a critical penetration. That they failed was due largely to the valor of three Marines who made a determined stand at the vital junction: PFC Robert F. Benson and Private Hector A. Cafferatta of the 2d Platoon, and PFC Gerald J. Smith, a fire team leader of the 3d. These men, assisted by the members of Smith's team, are credited with annihilating two enemy platoons.

While the enemy had undoubtedly planned the attack on the two rifle platoons with typical precision, it seems that he literally stumbled into the rear of Fox Company's position. Corporal Donald R. Thornton, member of a rocket launcher crew, reported that a group of Chinese walking along the MSR suddenly found themselves at the edge of Barber's CP and the mortar positions. The Communist soldiers recovered from the surprise and closed in aggressively, forcing the company commander and the mortar crews to ascend the hill to a protective line of trees. An embankment where the MSR cut through the base of the hill prevented pursuit by the Chinese. When they tried to climb over it they were cut down by small-arms fire; when they hid behind it they were riddled by grenades that the Marines rolled downhill; when they finally gave up and tried to flee, they were shot as they ran into the open.

On the right (east) side of the perimeter, the 1st Platoon was engaged only on the flanks, near the summit where it tied in with the 3d and down the slope where it joined the headquarters troops and mortar crews defending the rear.

Fighting around the 270° arc of the perimeter continued until after

daybreak. Despite losses of 20 dead and 54 wounded, Fox Company was in complete control of the situation. Lieutenant McCarthy described the breaking-off action as follows:

By 0630, 28 November, the Chinese had received so many casualties that the attack could no longer be considered organized. Few Chinese remained alive near the company perimeter. Individual Chinese continued to crawl up and throw grenades. A Marine would make a one-man assault on these individuals, shooting or bayoneting them. The attack could be considered over, although three Marines . . . were hit by rifle fire at 0730. We received small arms fire intermittently during the day, but no attack.

McCarthy estimated that enemy dead in front of the 2d and 3d Platoons numbered 350, while yet another 100 littered the 1st Platoon's zone and the area at the base of the hill along the MSR.⁶

Marine Counterattacks on North Ridge

As Companies C and F of the 7th Marines were fighting on the MSR in the hours just before dawn of 28 November, the first of a series of Marine counterattacks commenced at Yudam-ni. It was essential to the very survival of the 5th and 7th Regiments that the Chinese be driven back, or at least checked, on the high ground surrounding the village.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett, operating his CP in the no man's land at the base of North Ridge, ordered Company G of 3/5 to counterattack the spur of Hill 1384 at about 0300.⁷ The platoon of George Company outposting Southwest Ridge was left in position, but the other two platoons, under Second Lieutenants John J. Cahill and Dana B. Cashion, moved out abreast shortly after 0300. Driving northward aggressively, they crossed the MSR, "liberated" Taplett's CP, and cleared the draw in which Weapons Company of 3/5 was still entrenched. Troops of H&S Company followed the attackers and reoccupied their old positions in the gully.

Cahill and Cashion, displaying remarkable cohesion on unfamiliar ground in the darkness, led the way up Hill 1384. Their men advanced swiftly behind a shield of marching fire and routed the few⁸ Chinese on the spur. The position earlier vacated by the police platoon was recaptured, and the Marines saw numerous enemy dead in front of the

⁶ These figures would indicate the complete destruction of a CCF Battalion.

⁷ The description of 3/5's counterattack is derived from: 5thMar SAR, 21-22; 3/5 SAR, 14; Taplett interv, 3 May 56; Capt D. B. Cashion ltr, 16 Jul 56 and statement, n. d.

⁸ Cashion ltr, 16 Jul 56, estimates the opposition came from 25-30 Chinese.

South Korean machine gun emplacements. About 500 yards beyond the battalion CP the two platoons halted until daylight. The seven men who had formed the Item Company outpost on Hill 1384 arrived shortly afterwards and were integrated into Cashion's platoon.

He continued the attack soon after daybreak, with Cahill's platoon giving fire support. Cashion and his men plunged into enemy territory along the ridge line leading northward to the topographical crest of Hill 1384, about 1000 yards distant. They had reached the final slopes when Taplett received the radio message, almost incredible to him, that the two platoons were nearing the peak of Hill 1384. He directed them to discontinue the attack and withdraw to the top of the spur. There they were to establish a defense line overlooking Yudam-ni until receiving further orders. The spirited drive led by the two young officers had taken considerable pressure off the Marine units in the valley west of the village. One immediate effect was that approximately 80 officers and men of How Company, 7th Marines, were able to retire into 3/5's perimeter from the slopes of Hill 1403 on Northwest Ridge.

To the east of 3/5, a second successful counterattack by the 5th Marines brought stability to yet another critical point. Company C of 1/5 had deployed shortly after midnight to back up 3/5, in the event of a break-through in the valley. Owing to the adverse developments on Hills 1282 and 1240, however, it was later placed under operational control of the 7th Marines. One platoon left for Hill 1240 in the middle of the night to reinforce D/7, and the remainder of the company, led by Captain Jack R. Jones, ascended 1282 to assist E/7 and the two platoons of A/5 earlier committed.⁹

Charlie Company moved up a draw with Jones and his executive officer, First Lieutenant Loren R. Smith, in the van of the column, followed by the 1st and 2d Platoons and the 60mm mortar section. Light machine-gun sections were attached to the rifle platoons. The climb took almost two hours in the predawn darkness, the company frequently halting while Jones questioned wounded men descending from the top. Numb from cold, shock, and loss of blood, they could give no intelligible picture of a situation described as grim and confused.

⁹ The account of Company C's counterattack is derived from 5thMar SAR, 21; 1/5 SAR, 12-13; 7thMar SAR, 21; 7th Mar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1000 28 Nov 50; 1/5 HD, Nov 50, 8; Maj L. R. Smith interv, 31 May 56; Bey ltr, 26 Jun 52; ATIS *Enemy Documents: Korean Operations* Issue 66, 130-134, and Issue 84, 38-43; LtCol J. W. Stevens, II, Comments, 27 Jun 56; Capt E. E. Collins Comments, 19 Jun 56; SSgt R. C. Alvarez ltr, 18 Oct 55.

At approximately 0430, the head of the column came under heavy fire from above as it reached a point just below the military crest, about 100 yards from the summit of 1282. Here, Jones found Staff Sergeant Murphy from E/7's 3d Platoon which, along with Trapnell's, was out of sight on the spur to the right. Also out of sight but far to the left were Snyder's platoon of A/5 and a handful of men of Easy Company. While CCF grenades and small-arms fire rained down, Murphy explained that E/7's main position had been overrun and that he was attempting to form a holding line in the center with some 20 survivors of the summit battle.

Jones quickly deployed his two platoons for the attack, the 2d under Second Lieutenant Byron L. Magness on the right, the 1st under Second Lieutenant Max A. Merrit on the left. Murphy's small contingent joined the formation. Second Lieutenant Robert H. Corbet set up his 60mm mortar section to support the advance, then took a place in the assault line. Down in the valley the 81mm mortars of 1/5 opened up with a preparatory barrage. Artillery could not fire because of the short distance between friendly and enemy lines, and the first flight of Corsairs was not yet on station.

The frontal attack against the 3d Company, 1st Battalion, 235th CCF Regiment began shortly after daybreak. Jones personally led the Marine skirmishers against more than 50 enemy soldiers armed with machine guns and grenades. His troops moved upward through a hail of fire and overran the Communists after a savage clash that included hand-to-hand fighting. The Marines then deployed with the just-arrived 2d Platoon of Able Company bridging the gap between Jones and Trapnell in time to thwart the advance of enemy reinforcements.

According to enemy reports, only six or seven men survived the 3d Company's defeat. One of them happened to be the company political officer, who conveniently had retired from the battle line during the crucial stage of the struggle. At 1/235's CP, a few hundred yards to the rear, he was given a platoon of the 2d Company "in order to evacuate the wounded and to safeguard the occupied position on Hill 1282. . . ." The fresh unit ascended the northern slopes of the height while Jones' company was battling its way up from the south. By the time the Red soldiers of the 2d Company neared the summit, they were confronted from above by the muzzles of Marine rifles and machine guns. The whole story unfolds in CCF records as follows:

As soon as the 1st Platoon [2d Company] advanced to the 3d Company's position its assistant company commander came up with the platoon. At that

time, the enemy [C/5] counterattacked very violently. Accordingly, the assistant company commander ordered the 1st Platoon to strike the enemy immediately and determinedly. Before the 1st Platoon's troops had been deployed, Lee Feng Hsi, the Platoon Leader, shouted: "Charge!" So both the 1st and 2d Squads pressed forward in swarms side by side. When they were within a little more than ten meters of the top of the hill they suffered casualties from enemy hand grenades and short-range fire. Consequently, they were absolutely unable to advance any farther. At that time, the assistant company commander and the majority of the platoon and squad leaders were either killed or wounded.

While the 1st and 2d Squads were encountering the enemy's counterattack, the 3d Squad also deployed and joined them in an effort to drive the enemy to the back of the hill. As a result, more than half of the 3d Squad were either killed or wounded. When the second assistant platoon leader attempted to reorganize, his troops suffered again from enemy flanking fire and hand grenades. Thus, after having fought for no more than ten minutes, the entire platoon lost its attacking strength and was forced to retreat somewhat to be able to defend firmly the place it held.

Meanwhile, according to Chinese accounts, Tsung Hui Tzu, commander of the 2d Company, had arrived at the CP of 1/235 with his 2d Platoon at 0620. Noting that his 1st Platoon was in trouble, he said to the leader of the 2d, "There are some enemy soldiers on the hill [1282] in front of us; attack forward determinedly."

The 2d Platoon jumped off immediately with two squads abreast and one trailing. Within 30 meters of the crest, the Reds attempted to rush Charlie Company's position behind a barrage of hand grenades. The assault failed. On the right the assistant platoon leader fell at the head of the 4th squad, which was reduced to three survivors. Tsung, the company commander, rushed forward and led the 6th squad on the left. He was wounded and the squad cut to pieces. Incredibly, the platoon leader ordered the three remaining men of the 4th squad to assault the summit again. They tried and only one of them came back. The 5th squad, advancing out of reserve, had no sooner begun to deploy than it lost all of its NCOs. "As it mixed with the 4th and 6th squads to attack, they suffered casualties again from enemy flanking fire and hand grenades from the top of the hill. Therefore, the entire platoon lost its combat strength, with only seven men being left alive."

Not only was the commanding officer of 1/235 down to his last company, but that company was down to its last platoon. Forever hovering in the rear, the 2d Company's political officer, Liu Sheng Hsi, ordered the platoon to "continue the attack." The assault began with two squads forward, led by the platoon leader and his assistant. They charged

uphill into the teeth of Charlie Company's position. Like all the others, they were ground into the mat of corpses on the blood-soaked snow. To complete the suicide of the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, the reserve squad of this last platoon was committed. A few minutes later, "... there were only six men left."

The 2d Company paid for its failure with 94 of the original 116 officers and men. This loss, added to those of the 1st, 3d, and Special Duty Companies, would place 1/235's casualties on Hill 1282 at approximately 400, including practically all the company commanders, platoon leaders, and NCOs. It can be assumed that nearly all of the wounded succumbed, since evacuation was well nigh impossible with Marines in control of the summit for the next 24 hours.

Marine losses were not light. Able and Charlie Companies of 1/5 together suffered 15 KIA and 67 WIA. Easy Company of 2/7, according to best estimates, made its stand at a cost of about 120 killed and wounded.

Deadlock on Hill 1240

At daybreak of 20 November, several of Easy Company's casualties still lay in their foxholes on the forward slopes of Hill 1282. To recover them was an undertaking of great risk, even after the defeat of 1/235; for CCF survivors continued to fire at the summit from positions on the lower slopes. Captain Jones directed the evacuation and repeatedly ran forward of his lines to rescue half-frozen Marines who were immobilized by wounds.¹⁰

Headquarters personnel of 1/5 spent the whole morning removing casualties from 1282 and carrying them to the battalion and regimental aid stations, which soon were filled to overflowing. In the meantime, Able Company joined Charlie on the crest and assimilated the depleted platoons of Trapnell and Snyder. A new defensive line was drawn across the vital peak with C/5 in the center, A/5 on the right, and E/7, now under the command of Lieutenant Bey, on the left. By mid-morning, despite the continued exchange of fire with CCF troops on the slopes, there was no doubt that the Marines would hold the hill.¹¹

This was not the case 1000 yards to the right, where daybreak had

¹⁰ L. R. Smith interv, 31 May 56; Geer, *The New Breed*, 285.

¹¹ 5thMar SAR, 12-13; Collins Comments, 19 Jun 56.

found the shattered remnants of D/7 clinging to a toehold on Hill 1240 and beset from every direction by troops of the 3d Battalion, 236th CCF Regiment.¹² The 3d Platoon of C/5, which had been dispatched from the valley at 0400 to help, was delayed by darkness and terrain. Second Lieutenant Harold L. Dawe's small relief force became hotly engaged on the lower slopes, far short of Dog Company's position, but made a fighting ascent after dawn.

Initially Dawe missed contact with the beleaguered outfit, but afterwards the two forces cleared the Chinese from 1240. From his position on the northeastern spur of the hill he could see the enemy massing on the reverse slopes of 1240 and 1282. Communications were out and he could not call for fire. At about 1100 the Reds counterattacked with an estimated two or more battalions and forced Dawe to withdraw about 150 yards. There his depleted platoon and the 16 remaining men of Dog Company held under heavy mortar fire until relieved by B/5 at 1700. The price of a stalemate on Hill 1240 was to Dawe about half of his platoon, and to Hull practically his whole company.

The Fight for Northwest Ridge

To the left of North Ridge, dawn of 28 November revealed a tactical paradox on the looming massif of Northwest Ridge. Both Marines and Red Chinese occupied the terminal high ground, and it was difficult to determine which had emerged victorious from the all-night battle. How Company, 7th Marines, had withdrawn from Hill 1403, and from this commanding peak soldiers of the 89th CCF Division could observe and enfilade the whole of Yudam-ni valley. In addition to the 80 officers and men of How Company who had pulled back to the lines of 3/5 during the early morning, another group found its way to the rear of Easy Company, 2/5, as mentioned earlier.¹³

The appearance of the latter contingent at 0430 was a cause of consternation to Lieutenant Colonel Roise. His rifle companies had thrown back repeated CCF attacks along the draw and spur on the left of the 7th Marines' outfit, but the loss of 1403 now offset his victory and

¹² The account of the action of Hill 1240 is derived from: 5thMar SAR, 12; 1/5 SAR, 12-13; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1000 28 Nov 50; Geer, *The New Breed*, 288; Capt H. L. Dawe, Jr., Comments, n. d.

¹³ 3/5 SAR, 14, and 2/5 SAR, 18; 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 0840 28 Nov 50.

gravely imperiled his line of communications to the rest of the 5th Marines at Yudam-ni, a mile to the rear. Nevertheless, 2/5 continued to hold. At 0600 Company E counterattacked and drove the Chinese from the northern tip of the spur which they had occupied during the night. Fox Company, its right flank now restored and in contact with Easy, lashed out at 0800 and recaptured the two machine guns overrun by the enemy four hours earlier. Fifteen CCF soldiers who had found their way into the rear of Company F some time in the night were destroyed. Easy Company, after its successful counterattack on the spur, drove off a large Communist force attempting to move against its right flank.¹⁴

Incredibly, 2/5's losses for the night-long fight were 7 KIA, 25 WIA, and 60 weather casualties. Chinese dead piled across the front of Easy and Fox Companies numbered 500, according to a rough count.¹⁵ There was no estimate made by How Company, 7th Marines, of enemy losses on Hill 1403.

At 0145 on the 28th, Roise had received Murray's order to continue the attack to the west after daybreak, so that 3/5 could move forward, deploy, and add its weight to the X Corps offensive. Events during the night altered Murray's plans, of course, and at 0545 the regimental commander alerted Roise to the probability of withdrawing 2/5 to Southwest Ridge later in the morning. The battalion commander, not realizing the extent of the crisis at Yudam-ni, thought a mistake had been made when he checked the map coordinates mentioned in the message. Despite the fact that his whole front was engaged at the time, he was prepared to continue the westward drive, and he questioned regimental headquarters about the "error" which would take his battalion rearward. Needless to say, the correctness of the map coordinates was quickly confirmed.¹⁶

Lieutenant Colonel Murray visited Colonel Litzenberg at dawn on the 28th, while elements of the 5th Marines were counterattacking the Chinese forces on North and Northwest Ridges. They agreed that the enemy had appeared in sufficient strength to warrant a switch to the defensive by both regiments, and Murray cancelled the scheduled westward attack by his 2d and 3d Battalions. At 1100 he ordered 2/5 to pull back to Southwest Ridge, tying in on the left with 3/7 on the same

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Jaskilka, "Easy Alley."

¹⁵ 2/5 HD, Nov 50, 9-10.

¹⁶ 5thMar SAR, 21; 2/5 SAR, 19; Col J. L. Stewart interv 13 Jun 56.

hill mass, and on the right with 3/5, whose line extended from the valley northwest of Yudam-ni to the crest of North Ridge.¹⁷

Orders officially halting the northwestward advance and directing the 5th Marines to coordinate positions with the 7th Marines were sent by General Smith at 1650.¹⁸ Twenty-three minutes earlier he had ordered the 7th Marines to attack to the south and reopen the MSR to Hagaru.¹⁹

To coordinate better the defense of the new perimeter, Murray moved his CP from the northwestern edge of Yudam-ni to the center of the village, where the 7th Marines' headquarters was located. He spent most of his time thereafter with Litzenberg, while Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart, his executive officer, ran the 5th Regiment command post.²⁰ Through constant contact and a policy of close cooperation in all matters, the two regimental commanders and their staffs came up with joint plans for the defense of Yudam-ni and the ultimate breakout to Hagaru.

The first of these plans had to do with the realignment of forces at Yudam-ni and the rescue of Charlie and Fox Companies, 7th Marines. Early in the afternoon of 28 November, 2/5 began withdrawing from Northwest Ridge a company at a time, with Company E providing covering fire as rear guard. The battalion's displacement to Southwest Ridge was completed by 2000 against CCF resistance consisting only of harassing fires.²¹

Directly across the valley of Yudam-ni, Company I of 3/5 relieved the elements of 1/5 on Hill 1282 of North Ridge in late afternoon. George and How Companies of 3/5 deployed in the low ground to protect the corridor approaches to Yudam-ni from the northwest. Lieutenant Colonel Stevens, keeping the bulk of 1/5 in reserve, dispatched Company B at 1400 to relieve the battered handful of Marines on Hill 1240.

While this reshuffling took place on the 28th, Colonel Litzenberg listened anxiously to the grim reports from his 1st Battalion, which had set out in the morning to retrieve both Charlie and Fox Companies from their encircled positions on the MSR leading to Hagaru.²² Able

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Col R. L. Murray Comments, n. d.

¹⁸ CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 5thMar, 1650 28 Nov 50.

¹⁹ CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 7thMar, 1627 28 Nov 50.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; 5th Mar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1050 28 Nov 50.

²¹ 2/5 SAR, 19.

²² The account of C/5's rescue, is derived from: 7thMar SAR, 21; 7thMar msgs to CG 1stMarDiv 1150, 1200, 1450, 1550, 1915, 2040 28 Nov 50, and 0144 29 Nov 50; 7thMar msg to 2/7 0515 28 Nov 50; Geer, *The New Breed*, 290-291.

Company led off for the relief force at 1015, entering the gorge between South and Southeast Ridges. Five hours of fighting, marching, and climbing took it to a point about three miles from the Yudam-ni perimeter and one mile short of Company C's position. Here, while moving through the high ground east of the MSR, the vanguard met heavy resistance and was stopped cold.

Lieutenant Colonel Davis, who was following with the remainder of the 1st Battalion, committed Company B to a flanking movement west of the road. Air and 81mm mortars supported the auxiliary attack and routed the Chinese. Both companies advanced to high-ground positions abreast of Charlie Company's perimeter, then bent toward the MSR to provide a protective crescent between the beleaguered outfit and the enemy-infested ground to the south.

By now it was dark. Fox Company, according to plan, was supposed to have fought its way from Toktong Pass. Owing to the burden of casualties and the ring of Chinese around its distant hilltop, it was not able to do so. Litzenberg, concerned lest 1/7 be similarly trapped in the gorge, recalled Davis to Yudam-ni. The relief force returned at 2110 with Charlie Company and its 46 wounded.

Second Night's Attacks on Fox Hill

Fox Company, with 54 wounded on its hands, spent an active day at the top of Toktong Pass.²³ After the Chinese attacks subsided in the morning, Barber's men collected ammunition and weapons from Marine casualties and Communist dead. Included among enemy arms were several of the familiar U. S. Thompson submachine guns and Model 1903 Springfield rifles.

At 1030 a flight of Australian F-51s (Mustangs) blasted CCF positions around Toktong Pass, particularly a rocky promontory several hundred yards to the north on Hill 1653, which the enemy already had transformed into a redoubt. Within the Marine perimeter, the wounded were placed in two tents on a sheltered hillside where Navy corpsmen attended them constantly. According to Lieutenant McCarthy's account, the medics, "by candlelight . . . changed the bandages, slipped men in and out of sleeping bags, warmed C-rations for the men, and melted

²³ This account of Company F's activities on 28 Nov is derived from: 7thMar SAR, 18-24; McCarthy, "Fox Hill," 16-23; Thornton interv, 3 Jul 51; Dana-Danford interv 4 Jul 51; Geer, *The New Breed*, 300-302; Statement of Cpl C. R. North, n. d.

the morphine syrettes in their mouths before the injections. Because the plasma was frozen the corpsmen had to watch men die for the lack of it."

During late morning and the afternoon, Barber sent out patrols to screen the areas immediately beyond his lines. The scouting parties met only sniper fire, but other evidence of enemy activity indicated that Fox Hill was completely surrounded. An appeal for resupply by air was answered later in the day when Marine R5Ds dropped medical kits and ammunition at the base of the hill. At a cost of two wounded, the precious supplies were recovered before sundown.

Fox Company's perimeter for the night of 28-29 November was the same as before, except that the ranks were noticeably thinner. Nevertheless, a feeling of confidence pervaded the men on the hilltop; they believed implicitly that they could hold. They believed it despite the fact that strong relief columns from both Yudam-ni and Hagaru had been unable to break through to them.

All was quiet on Fox Hill until 0215, when CCF mortar rounds killed one Marine and wounded two others in the 3d Platoon, now reduced to some 20 able-bodied men. About 40 Chinese made a penetration in this area after a series of probing attacks all along the line. One Marine crew turned its light machine gun about and brought it to bear on the bunched-up attackers with deadly effect. A gap in the lines on both flanks caused the platoon to pull back about 20 yards. At sunrise, however, Staff Sergeant John D. Audas led a counter-attack which regained the lost ground at a cost of only two wounded.

The second night's fighting cost Fox Company a total of five killed and 29 wounded. Both Captain Barber and Lieutenant McCarthy suffered leg wounds, but continued in action after receiving first aid. The company commander directed that the open ground on Fox Hill be marked with colored parachutes from the previous day's air drops. This provision resulted in accurate drops and easy recoveries when Marine transport planes arrived at 1030 on the 29th with ammunition and supplies. Shortly afterwards First Lieutenant Floyd J. Englehardt of VMO-6 landed with batteries for the SCR-300 and 619 radios. Although his helicopter was damaged by hits from long-distance Chinese fire, he managed to take off safely.

Air drops that afternoon by C-119s of the Combat Cargo Command missed the marked zone at times, and much of the mortar ammunition landed about 500 yards to the west of the perimeter. Lieutenant Peter-

son, already twice wounded, led Marines who recovered some of the rounds but were pinned down by CCF fire and got back, one at a time, with difficulty. At dusk, under cover of fire from How Battery, another detail recovered the ammunition without enemy interference.

Not Enough Tents for Casualties

The night of 28–29 November passed with only minor activity in the Yudam-ni area for the infantry of RCT-5; but the regimental surgeon, Lieutenant Commander Chester M. Lessenden (MC) USN, had his hands full. During the fighting of the previous night the joint aid station had been west of Yudam-ni. Tents sheltering the wounded were riddled by enemy small-arms fire from the North Ridge battle, and on the morning of the 28th the aid station displaced to a safer location southwest of Yudam-ni. The seriously wounded filled the few tents initially available, and the others were protected from freezing by being placed outdoors, side by side, and covered by tarpaulins while lying on straw. Primitive as this hospitalization was, DOW cases were no more than might have been expected under better conditions.²⁴

The crowding in the aid stations was much relieved on 30 November by the erection of sufficient tentage by 4/11 to provide shelter for approximately 500 casualties.

"Everything was frozen," said Lessenden later in an interview with Keyes Beech, a press correspondent. "Plasma froze and the bottles broke. We couldn't use plasma because it wouldn't go into solution and the tubes would clog up with particles. We couldn't change dressings because we had to work with gloves on to keep our hands from freezing.

"We couldn't cut a man's clothes off to get at a wound because he would freeze to death. Actually a man was often better off if we left him alone. Did you ever try to stuff a wounded man into a sleeping bag?"²⁵

The joint defense plan for the night of 28–29 November provided for RCT-5 to take the responsibility for the west and north sectors, while RCT-7 was to defend to the east, south and southwest. Enemy

²⁴ 5thMar SAR, 48; Stewart interv, 13 Jun 56; 4/11 SAR, 5; McReynolds interv, 26 Nov 56.

²⁵ Keyes Beech: *Tokyo and Points East* (New York, 1954), 196.

mortar fire was received during the night in both regimental zones, but there were few infantry contacts. This lack of activity could only be interpreted as a temporary lull while the enemy regrouped for further efforts.

As for the next attempt to relieve Fox Company and open the MSR to Hagaru, the joint planners at Yudam-ni decided on the night of the 28th that all troops of the two regiments now in line were needed for defense. There were actually no men to spare for a relief column, and yet Division had ordered the effort to be made. The solution seemed to be a composite battalion consisting of perimeter reserve units. In order to replace these troops, personnel were to be assigned from headquarters units and artillery batteries. This was the genesis of the Composite Battalion, consisting of elements from Able Company of 1/5, Baker Company of 1/7 and George Company of 3/7, reinforced by a 75mm recoilless section and two 81mm mortar sections from RCT-7 battalions. These troops were directed to assemble at the 1/7 CP on the morning of the 29th, with Major Warren Morris, executive officer of 3/7, in command.²⁶

At 0800 the striking force moved out southward with the dual mission of relieving Captain Barber and opening up the MSR all the way to Hagaru. After an advance of 300 yards, heavy machine-gun fire hit the column from both sides of the road. Groups of Chinese could be plainly seen on the ridges, affording remunerative targets for the 81mm mortars and 75 recoilless guns. Forward air controllers soon had the Corsairs overhead to lead the way. At a point about 4500 yards south of Yudam-ni, however, Marine planes dropped two messages warning that the enemy was entrenched in formidable force along the high ground on both sides of the MSR.

Similar messages were delivered by the aircraft to the regimental CP at Yudam-ni. They caused Colonel Litzenberg to modify the orders of the Composite Battalion and direct that it relieve Fox Company and return to Yudam-ni before dark.

By this time Morris' troops had become engaged with large numbers of Chinese who were being constantly reinforced by groups moving into the area along draws masked from friendly ground observation. Litzenberg was informed on a basis of air observation that Morris was in danger of being surrounded, and at 1315 he sent an urgent message

²⁶ This account of the Composite Battalion is derived from the following sources: Narrative of Maj W. R. Earney, n. d., 5-8; 3/7 SAR, n. p.

directing the force to return to Yudam-ni. Contact was broken off immediately with the aid of air and artillery cover and the Composite Battalion withdrew without further incident.

The Turning Point of 30 November

The Yudam-ni area had a relatively quiet night on 29–30 November. But even though there was little fighting, the continued sub-zero cold imposed a strain on the men when at least a fifty per cent alert must be maintained at all times. This was the third virtually sleepless night for troops who had not had a warm meal since the Thanksgiving feast.

"Seldom has the human frame been so savagely punished and continued to function," wrote Keyes Beech. "Many men discovered reserves of strength they never knew they possessed. Some survived and fought on will power alone."²⁷

Certainly there was no lack of will power on Fox Hill as Captain Barber called his platoon leaders together at about 1700 on 29 November and told them not to expect any immediate relief. Chinese attacks, he warned, might be heavier than ever this third night, but they would be beaten off as usual.

The area was quiet until about 0200 on the 30th, when an Oriental voice called out of the darkness in English, "Fox Company, you are surrounded. I am a lieutenant from the 11th Marines. The Chinese will give you warm clothes and good treatment. Surrender now!"²⁸ The Marines replied with 81mm illumination shells which revealed targets for the machine guns as the Chinese advanced across the valley from the south.

Thanks to the afternoon's air drops, Fox Hill had enough mortar ammunition and hand grenades for the first time, and good use was made of both. An estimated three CCF companies were cut to pieces at a cost of a single Marine wounded.

At sunrise, as the Corsairs roared over, all tension vanished on Fox Hill. For it was generally agreed that if the Chinese couldn't take the position in three nights, they would never make the grade.

The troops in the Yudam-ni area also felt that the enemy had shot

²⁷ Beech, *Tokyo and Points East*, 197.

²⁸ This description of the third night on Fox Hill is derived from McCarthy, "Fox Hill," 21.

his bolt without achieving anything more than a few local gains at a terrible cost in killed and wounded. It was recognized that some hard fighting lay ahead, but the morning of the 30th was a moral turning point both in the foxhole and the CP.

It was evident even on the platoon level at Yudam-ni that big events were in the wind. Marine enlisted men are traditionally shrewd at sizing up a tactical situation, and they sensed that a change was at hand. For three days and nights they had been on the defensive, fighting for their lives, and now the word was passed from one man to another that the Marines were about to snatch the initiative.

The regimental commanders and staff officers had a worry lifted from their minds when a helicopter brought the news that Hagaru had passed a quiet night after repulsing large enemy forces in a dusk-to-dawn battle the night before. It would have added enormously to the task of the Yudam-ni troops, of course, if the Chinese had seized that forward base with its air strip and stockpiles of supplies. Thus it was heartening to learn that a single reinforced Marine infantry battalion and an assortment of service troops had beaten off the attacks of large elements of a Chinese division at Hagaru. The following two chapters will be devoted to an account of that critical battle and its aftermath before returning to Yudam-ni.

CHAPTER X

Hagaru's Night of Fire

Four-Mile Perimeter Required—Attempts to Clear MSR—Intelligence as to CCF Capabilities—Positions of Marine Units—CCF Attacks from the Southwest—East Hill Lost to Enemy—The Volcano of Supporting Fires—Marine Attacks on East Hill

THE IMPORTANCE of Hagaru in the Marine scheme of things was starkly obvious after the Chinese cut the MSR. Hagaru, with its supply dumps, hospital facilities and partly finished C-47 airstrip, was the one base offering the 1st Marine Division a reasonable hope of uniting its separated elements. Hagaru had to be held at all costs, yet only a reinforced infantry battalion (less one rifle company and a third of its Weapons Company) and two batteries of artillery were available for the main burden of the defense.

Owing to transportation shortages, the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines did not arrive at Hagaru until after dusk on 26 November. Even so, it had been necessary to leave George Company and a platoon of Weapons Company behind at Chigyong for lack of vehicles.¹

The parka-clad Marines, climbing down stiffly from the trucks, had their first sight of a panorama which reminded one officer of old photographs of a gold-rush mining camp in the Klondike. Tents, huts, and supply dumps were scattered in a seemingly haphazard fashion about a frozen plain crossed by a frozen river and bordered on three sides by low hills rising to steep heights on the eastern outskirts. Although many of the buildings had survived the bombings, the battered town

¹ This section is derived from: 1stMar HD, Nov 50, 2; 3/1 SAR, 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 2-3; Col T. L. Ridge ltr, 22 Sep 55, and Comments, 7 Jun 56; LtCol E. H. Simmons Comments, n. d.

at the foot of the ice-locked Chosin Reservoir was not a spectacle calculated to raise the spirits of newcomers.

It was too late to relieve 2/7(-) that evening. Lieutenant Colonels Ridge and Lockwood agreed that Fox Company, 7th Marines, and Weapons Company (-) of 2/7 would occupy positions jointly with 3/1. The hours of darkness passed quietly and relief was completed the next day. Fox Company then moved to its new positions near Toktong Pass.

Four-Mile Perimeter Required

On the morning of 27 November, of course, an all-out enemy attack was still in the realm of speculation. But it was evident to Lieutenant Colonel Ridge, CO of 3/1, that one to two infantry regiments and supporting arms would be required for an adequate defense of Hagaru. With only a battalion (-) at his disposal, he realized that he must make the best possible use of the ground. For the purposes of a survey, he sent his S-3, Major Trompeter, on a walking reconnaissance with Major Simmons, CO of Weapons Company and 3/1 Supporting Arms Coordinator.

After a circuit of the natural amphitheater, the two officers agreed that even to hold the reverse slopes would require a perimeter of more than four miles in circumference (see Map 17). The personnel resources of 3/1 would thus be stretched to an average of one man for nearly seven yards of front. This meant that the commanding officer must take his choice between being weak everywhere or strong in a few sectors to the neglect of others. In either event, some areas along the perimeter would probably have to be defended by supporting fires alone.²

"Under the circumstances," commented General Smith, "and considering the mission assigned to the 1st Marine Division, an infantry component of one battalion was all that could be spared for the defense of Hagaru. This battalion was very adequately supported by air, and had sufficient artillery and tanks for its purposes."³

The terrain gave the enemy two major covered avenues of approach for troop movements. One was the hill mass east of Hagaru, the other a draw leading into the southwest side of the town, where the new

² Ridge, *Notes*; LtCol E. H. Simmons interv, 1 Dec 55.

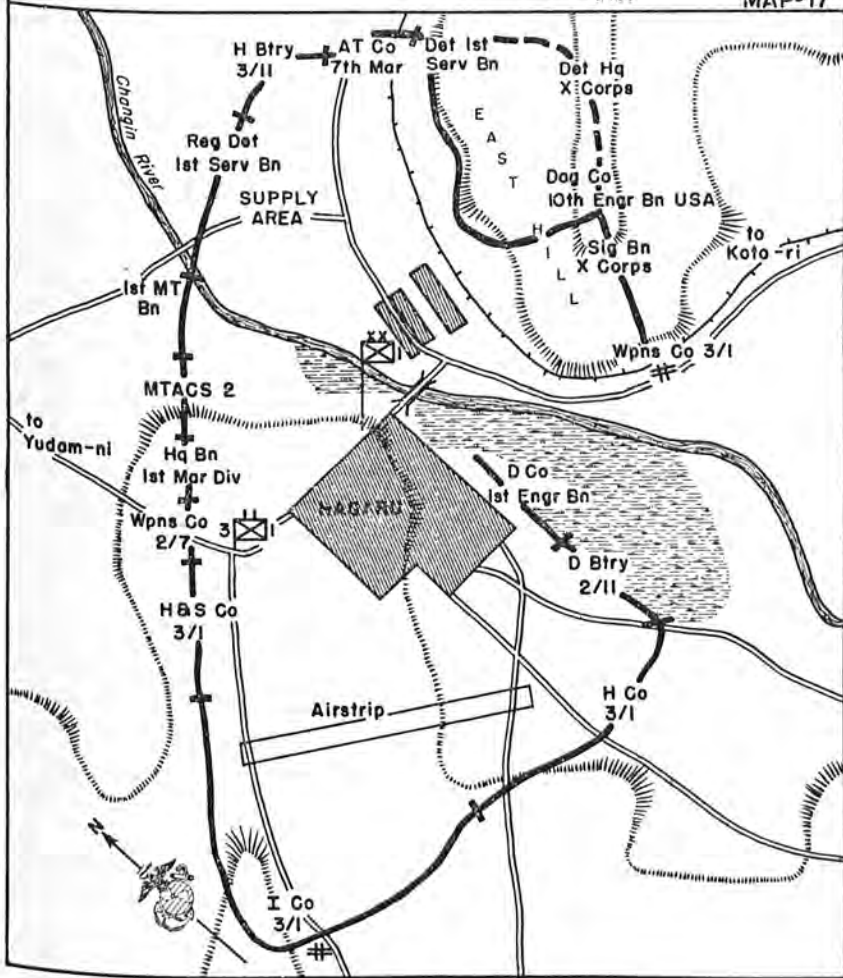
³ Gen O. P. Smith ltr, 17 May 56.

HAGARU DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

28-29 November 1950



MAP-17



airstrip was being constructed. Nor could the possibility of a surprise attack from some other quarter be dismissed entirely, since CCF observers would be able to watch Marine preparations from the surrounding hills in daylight hours.

Lieutenant Colonel Ridge decided that final troop dispositions must depend not only on terrain but equally on intelligence as to enemy capabilities. Until he had more information, the units of 3/1 were to remain in the areas formerly occupied by 2/7.

Attempts to Clear MSR

The Battalion CP had been set up in a pyramidal tent at the angle of the road to Yudam-ni. Most of the day on the 27th was given over to improving positions. At the southwest end of the perimeter, First Lieutenant Fisher's Item Company took over from Captain Barber's Fox Company, the only rifle company of 2/7 remaining at Hagaru.

On the strength of preliminary S-2 reports, Ridge instructed the commanders of his two rifle companies to improve their sectors, which included the entire south and southwest curve of the perimeter. All the Division Headquarters troops except one motor convoy had reached Hagaru by the 27th, and it was due to leave Hungnam the next morning. The new Division CP was located in the northeast quarter of town, near the long concrete bridge over the frozen Changjin River. Rows of heated tents surrounded a Japanese type frame house repaired for the occupancy of General Smith, who was expected by helicopter in the morning. Already functioning at the CP were elements of the General Staff Sections and Headquarters Company.⁴

The busiest Marines at Hagaru on the 27th were the men of the 1st Engineer Battalion. While a Company B platoon built tent decks for the Division CP, detachments of Company A were at work on the maintenance of the MSR in the area, and Company D had the job of hacking out the new airstrip. Apparently the latter project had its "sidewalk contractors" even in sub-zero weather, for this comment found its way into the company report:

Dozer work [was] pleasing to the eye of those who wanted activity but contributed little to the overall earth-moving problem of 90,000 cubic yards of cut and 60,000 cubic yards of fill.⁵

⁴ Smith, *Notes*, 689-690.

⁵ D/Engr SAR.

Motor graders and scrapers with a 5.8 cubic yard capacity had been moved up from Hamhung. So difficult did it prove to get a bite of the frozen earth that steel teeth were welded to the blades. When the pan was filled, however, the earth froze to the cutting edges until it could be removed only by means of a jack hammer.

The strip was about one-fourth completed on the 27th, according to minimum estimates of the length required. Work went on that night as usual under the flood lights.⁶ Not until the small hours of the morning did the first reports reach Hagaru of the CCF attacks on Yudam-ni and Fox Hill.

Some remnants of 2/7 were still at Hagaru, for lack of transportation, when Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood, commanding officer of the battalion, received a dispatch from Colonel Litzenberg directing him to proceed to Toktong Pass and assist Fox Company. At 0530 he requested the "loan" of a rifle company of 3/1 to reinforce elements of Weapons Company (-), 2/7. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge could spare only a platoon from How Company, and at 0830 the attempt was cancelled. An hour later Weapons Company and three tanks from the 2d Platoon of Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, made another effort. They pushed half-way to the objective, only to be turned back by heavy Chinese small-arms and mortar fire from the high ground on both sides of the road. Supporting fires from 3/1 helped the column to break off contact and return to Hagaru at 1500.⁷

No better success attended a reinforced platoon of How Company, 3/1, accompanied by three Company D tanks, when it set out on the road to Koto-ri. On the outskirts of Hagaru, within sight of Captain Corley's CP, the men were forced to climb down from their vehicles and engage in a hot fire fight. They estimated the enemy force at about 50, but an OY pilot dropped a message warning that some 300 Chinese were moving up on the flanks of the patrol. The Marines managed to disengage at 1530, with the aid of mortar and artillery fires from Hagaru, and returned to the perimeter with losses of one killed and five wounded.⁸

A similar patrol from Item Company, 3/1, struck off to the southwest of the perimeter in the direction of Hungmun-ni. Late in the

⁶ 1stEngrBn SAR, 11; and Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51.

⁷ 3/1 SAR, 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 4; 1stTkBn SAR, 21; 3/1 msg to CO 1stMar, 1845 Nov 50.

⁸ *Ibid.*; Narrative of Maj C. E. Corley, n. d.

morning of the 28th, this reinforced platoon encountered an estimated 150 enemy and called for artillery and mortar fires. After dispersing this CCF group, the patrol routed a second enemy detachment an hour later after a brief fire fight.⁹

Any lingering doubts as to the extent of the Chinese attack on the MSR were dispelled by reports from the OY and HO3S-1 pilots of VMO-6. They disclosed that defended enemy road blocks had cut off Yudam-ni, Fox Hill, Hagaru, and Koto-ri from any physical contact with one another. The advance units of the 1st Marine Division had been sliced into four isolated segments as CCF columns penetrated as far south as the Chinhung-ni area.¹⁰

Intelligence as to CCF Capabilities

There was no question at all in the minds of Lieutenant Colonel Ridge and his officers as to whether the Chinese would attack at Hagaru. As early as the morning of the 27th, the problem had simply been one of when, where, and in what strength. It was up to the S-2 Section to provide the answers, and upon their correctness would depend the fate of Hagaru, perhaps even of the 1st Marine Division.

Second Lieutenant Richard E. Carey, the S-2, was a newcomer to the battalion staff, recently transferred from a George Company infantry platoon. His group consisted of an assistant intelligence chief, Staff Sergeant Saverio P. Gallo, an interpreter, and four scout observers.¹¹ There were also two CIC agents assigned to 3/1 by Division G-2.

At Hagaru, as at Majon-ni, the Marines had won respect at the outset by allowing the Korean residents all privileges of self-government which could be reconciled with military security. The police department and town officials had been permitted to continue functioning. They in turn briefed the population as to restricted areas and security regulations, particularly curfew. Korean civilians entering Hagaru through Marine road blocks were searched before being taken

⁹ 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 4; and 1stLt R. C. Needbon [sic] interv by Capt K. A. Shutts, 28 May 51.

¹⁰ VMO-6 tel to G-2 1stMarDiv, 1015 28 Nov 50; CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1100 28 Nov 50; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMar, 1103 28 Nov 50.

¹¹ This section is based on Ridge, *Notes*, and *Comments*, 7 Jun 56; Narrative of Capt R. E. Carey, 3 Feb 56. The need for NCOs in rifle platoons was so pressing that the former intelligence chief, TSgt James E. Sweeney, had been transferred from the S-2 Section just before the move to Hagaru.

to the police station where they were questioned by an interrogation team from the S-2 Section.

Hagaru's resemblance to a gold-rush mining camp was heightened on the 27th by a tremendous influx both of troops and Koreans from outlying districts. A large truck convoy from Headquarters Battalion arrived to set up the new Division CP, and detachments from various Marine or Army service units entered in a seemingly endless stream. The Korean refugees had much the same story to tell; most of them came from areas to the north and west of Hagaru, and they had been evicted from their homes by large numbers of CCF troops.

Carey instructed his CIC agents to converse with incoming Koreans and learn everything possible about the enemy situation. Again, as at Majon-ni, people who had been thoroughly indoctrinated with Communism were found "highly co-operative." As untrained observers, however, their estimates of CCF numbers and equipment could not be taken too literally. Since their statements agreed that the enemy was in close proximity, Carey decided to take the risk of sending his two CIC agents on the dangerous mission of establishing direct contact. They were enjoined to make a circuit of the perimeter, mingling whenever possible with the Chinese and determining the areas of heaviest concentration.

The results went beyond Carey's fondest expectations. Not only did his agents return safely from their long hike over the hills, but they brought back vital information. Well led and equipped Chinese Communist units had been encountered to the south and west of Hagaru. And since Marine air also reported unusual activity in this area, it was a reasonable assumption that the enemy was concentrated there approximately in division strength.

This answered the questions as to "how many" and "where." There remained the problem as to "when" the attack might be expected, and again on the 28th Carey sent out his CIC agents to make direct contact. "I expected little or no information," he recollected, "but apparently these men had a way with them. Upon reporting back, they told me that they had talked freely with enemy troops, including several officers who boasted that they would occupy Hagaru on the night of 28 November."

Major enemy units were reported to be five miles from the perimeter. Dusk was at approximately 1800, with complete darkness setting in shortly afterwards. Adding the estimate of three and a half hours for

Chinese movements to the line of departure, the S-2 Section calculated that the enemy could attack as early as 2130 on the night of the 28th from the south and west in division strength.¹²

Positions of Marine Units

These intelligence estimates were accepted by Lieutenant Colonel Ridge as the basis for his planning and troop dispositions. As the main bastion of defense, the tied-in sectors of How and Item Companies were extended to include the south and southwest sides of the perimeter—nearly one-third of the entire circumference—in a continuous line 2300 yards in length, or more than a mile and a quarter. Each platoon front thus averaged about 380 yards, which meant that supporting arms must make up for lack of numbers.¹³

East Hill, considered the second most likely point of enemy attack, was to be assigned to George Company on arrival. Captain Sitter's outfit had orders to depart the Chigyong area on the morning of the 28th, so that it could be expected at Hagaru before dark.

The southeast quarter of the perimeter, between East Hill and the left flank of How Company, was to be held by the following units: (1) Weapons Company (less detachments reinforcing the rifle companies and its 81mm mortars emplaced near the battalion CP) manning a road block on the route to Koto-ri and defending the south nose of East Hill; (2) Dog Company, 1st Engineer Battalion (less men at work on the airstrip), occupying the ground south of the concrete bridge; and (3) Dog Battery, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, which had the mission of covering 75 per cent of the perimeter with observed indirect fire and 25 per cent with direct fire.

These dispositions left a gap between Weapons Company and the engineer and artillery units on the west bank of the Changjin River. But this stretch of frozen marshland was so well covered by fire that an enemy attack here would have been welcomed.

The first reports of the CCF onslaughts at Yudam-ni and Fox Hill,

¹² The possibility of an attack from the East Hill area was considered, since Chinese forces were known to be east of the hill. Col Ridge states, "I assume[d] that the build up of such forces would not allow their capability of a strong attack." Ridge Comments, 7 Jun 56.

¹³ This section, unless otherwise noted, is based upon the following sources: 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50; Ridge, *Notes*; Maj A. J. Strohmenger ltr to Col T. L. Ridge, 17 Aug 55; Corley narrative; Narrative of Maj J. R. Fisher, n. d.; Simmons Comments.

as interpreted by Lieutenant Colonel Ridge, "clearly indicated that no time was to be lost at buttoning up the Hagaru perimeter." He called on Colonel Bowser, the Division G-3, on the morning of the 28th and recommended that an overall defense commander be designated with operational control over all local units. Ridge also requested that George Company and the 41st Commando be expedited in their movement to Hagaru.

Before a decision could be reached, General Smith arrived by helicopter and opened the Division CP at 1100. A Marine rear echelon had remained at Hungnam to cope with supply requirements. Colonel Francis A. McAlister, the G-4, left in command, accomplished during the forthcoming campaign what General Smith termed "a magnificent job" in rendering logistical support.¹⁴

The CP at Hagaru had been open only half an hour when General Almond arrived in a VMO-6 helicopter to confer with the Division commander. Departing at 1255, he visited the 31st Infantry troops who had been hard hit the night before by CCF attacks east of the Chosin Reservoir. On his return to Hamhung, the Corps commander was informed that CinCFE had directed him to fly immediately to Tokyo for a conference. There he learned that the Eighth Army was in full retreat, with some units taking heavy losses both in personnel and equipment. Generals Almond, Walker, Hickey, Willoughby, Whitney, and Wright took turns at briefing the commander in chief during a meeting which lasted from midnight to 0130.¹⁵

At Hagaru it was becoming more apparent hourly to Ridge that his prospects of employing Captain Sitter's company on East Hill were growing dim. As he learned later, the unit had left Chigyong that morning in the trucks of Company B, 7th Motor Transport Battalion, commanded by Captain Clovis M. Jones. Sitter was met at Koto-ri by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Rickert, executive officer of RCT-1, and directed to report to the regimental S-3, Major Robert E. Lorigan. Efforts to open up the road to Hagaru had failed, he was told, and it would be necessary for George Company to remain overnight at Koto-ri.¹⁶

The probability of such an outcome had already been accepted by Ridge on the basis of the resistance met on the road to Koto-ri by his

¹⁴ Smith, *Notes*, 695-696; CG 1stMarDiv msg to All Units, 1015 28 Nov 50.

¹⁵ CG Diary, in X Corps *WD*, 28 Nov 50; X Corps *WDSum*, Nov 50, 16.

¹⁶ Narrative of Major C. L. Sitter, n. d.

How Company patrol. With this development added to his worries he received a telephone call at 1500 from Colonel Bowser, informing him that he had been named defense commander at Hagaru by General Smith.¹⁷

Just ten minutes later a single CCF shell, assumed to be of 76mm caliber, exploded in the Battalion CP area and fatally wounded Captain Paul E. Storaasli, the S-4. The perimeter was so cluttered with tents and dumps that artillery fire at random could hardly have been wasted but the enemy gun remained silent the rest of the day, doubtless to avert Marine counter-battery reprisals.

Only three hours of daylight remained when the newly designated defense commander summoned unit commanders to an initial conference. It was not made clear just what troops had been placed under his operational control. "A primary reason," commented Ridge, "was that no one knew what units were there, this being compounded by the numerous small elements such as detachments, advance parties, etc., of which many were Corps and ROK units. Hence, the Battalion S-1 and his assistants were a combination of town criers and census takers. We did, however, get most of the commanders of major units (if such they could be called) to the initial conference, but the process of locating and identifying smaller units was thereafter a continuous process which we really never accurately completed."¹⁸

The larger outfits could be summoned to the conference by telephone but it was necessary to send out runners in other instances. With George Company not available, the question of defending East Hill loomed large. Ridge decided against all proposals that one of the two rifle companies be used for that purpose. On the strength of the S-2 report, he preferred to concentrate as much strength as possible against an attack from the southwest. This meant taking his chances on East Hill with such service troops as he could scrape up, and it was plain that a strong CCF effort in this quarter would have to be met in large part by fire power from supporting arms.

The two main detachments selected for East Hill (excluding the south nose) were from Dog Company of the 10th Engineer (C) Battalion, USA, and elements of X corps Headquarters. Since the mission called for control of mortar and artillery fires as well as tactical leadership, two officers of Weapons Company, 3/1, were assigned—Captain

¹⁷ This was made official by CG 1stMarDiv msg to Subordinate Units, 1625 28 Nov 50

¹⁸ Ridge, *Notes*, 27-28.

John C. Shelnutt to the Army engineer company, and First Lieutenant John L. Burke, Jr., to the Headquarters troops. Each was to be accompanied by a Marine radio (SCR 300) operator.

Smaller detachments were later sent to East Hill from two other service units—the 1st Service Battalion, 1st Marine Division, and the 4th Signal Battalion of X Corps.

The Antitank Company of the 7th Marines defended the area to the north of East Hill. Next came How Battery, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, which had the primary mission of supporting Fox Company, 2/7, on the hill near Toktong Pass. But by moving gun trails the cannoners could with some difficulty fire on the 270° arc of the perimeter stretching from the right flank of Item Company around to the north nose of East Hill.

Between the sectors held by How Battery, 3/11, and Item Company, 3/1, were troops of five Marine units: Regulating Detachment, 1st Service Battalion; 1st Motor Transport Battalion; Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2 (MTACS-2); Division Headquarters Battalion; and H&S Company 3/1. The only other unit in this quarter was Weapons Company (-), 2/7, which held the road block on the route to Yudam-ni.

At the conference it was decided that since Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Banks' Regulating Detachment had taken the lead in organizing the Supply Area on the north side of Hagaru, the arc of the perimeter east of the river and west of East Hill was to be made into a secondary defense zone. Banks thus became in effect a sub-sector commander. The only infantry troops in the Supply Area being detachments of 2/7 units, it was also agreed that tactical decisions concerning the zone should be discussed with the two ranking battalion officers—Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood, the commander, and Major Sawyer, the executive.¹⁹

These matters having been settled, the conference broke up shortly after 1700 and the various commanders hastened back to their outfits to make last-minute preparations for the night's attack. A strange hush had fallen over the perimeter, broken only by the occasional crackle of small-arms fire, and the damp air felt like snow.

¹⁹ "CO 2/7 and his headquarters were not given a specific mission because it was assumed that his uncanceled order from CO 7th Marines would require his further efforts in the relief of Fox Company." Ridge Comments, 7 June 56.

CCF Attack from the Southwest

How and Item Companies were ready. All platoon positions were well dug in, though the earth was frozen to a depth of six to ten inches.

The men of Item Company used their heads as well as hands after Lieutenant Fisher managed to obtain a thousand sandbags and several bags of C3. This explosive was utilized in ration cans to make improvised shape charges which blasted a hole through the frozen crust of snow and earth. Then it became a simple matter to enlarge the hole and place the loose dirt in sandbags to form a parapet.²⁰ This ingenious system resulted in de luxe foxholes and mortar emplacements attaining to the dignity of field fortifications.

Both company fronts bristled with concertinas, trip flares, booby traps, and five-gallon cans of gasoline rigged with thermite bombs for illumination. Three probable routes of enemy attack channeled the low hills to the southwest—a main draw leading to the junction between the two company sectors, and a lesser draw providing an approach to each. The ground in front of the junction had been mined, and two tanks from the Provisional Platoon were stationed in this quarter. Detachments from Weapons Company also reinforced both rifle companies. Thus the six platoons faced the enemy in the following order:

ITEM COMPANY			HOW COMPANY		
	Lt Fisher			Capt Corley	
Lt Degerne	Lt Hall	Lt Needham	Lt Barrett	Lt Endsley	Lt Mason
1st	3d	2d	1st	3d	2d

Beginning at 1700, hot food was served to all hands in rotation. A fifty per cent alert went into effect after dark as the men were sent back on regular schedule for coffee and a smoke in warming tents located as close to the front as possible. The first snowflakes fluttered down about 1950, muffling the clank of the dozers at work as usual under the floodlights on the airstrip behind the How Company's sector. Just before 2130, the expected time of CCF attack, both company commanders ordered a hundred per cent alert, but the enemy did not show up on schedule. It was just over an hour later when three red flares

²⁰ This section, unless otherwise noted, is based on: 3/1 tel to CO 1stMar, 2100 29 Nov 50; Ridge, *Notes*; Simmons interv, 1 Dec 55 and Comments; Fisher narrative; Corley narrative; Narrative of Capt R. L. Barrett, Jr., 9 Aug 55; Capt J. H. Miller ltr to authors, 10 Oct 55; and Sgt K. E. Davis ltr to authors, 20 Oct 55.

and three blasts on a police whistle signaled the beginning of the attack. Soon trip flares and exploding booby traps revealed the approach of probing patrols composed of five to ten men.

A few minutes later, white phosphorus mortar shells scorched the Marine front line with accurate aim. The main CCF attack followed shortly afterwards, with both company sectors being hit by assault waves closing in to grenade-throwing distance.

The enemy in turn was staggered by the full power of Marine supporting arms. Snowflakes reduced an already low visibility, but fields of fire had been carefully charted and artillery and mortar concentrations skillfully registered in. Still, the Communists kept on coming in spite of frightful losses. Second Lieutenant Wayne L. Hall, commanding the 3d Platoon in the center of Item Company, was jumped by three Chinese whom he killed with a .45 caliber automatic pistol after his carbine jammed. The third foe pitched forward into Hall's foxhole.

On the left flank, tied in with How Company, First Lieutenant Robert C. Needham's 2d Platoon sustained most of the attack on Item Company. The fire of Second Lieutenant James J. Boley's 60mm mortars and Second Lieutenant John H. Miller's light machine guns was concentrated in this area. It seemed impossible that enemy burp guns could miss such a target as Lieutenant Fisher, six feet two inches in height and weighing 235 pounds. But he continued to pass up and down the line, pausing at each foxhole for a few words of encouragement. By midnight the enemy pressure on Needham's and Hall's lines had slackened, and on the right flank Second Lieutenant Mayhlon L. Degernes' 1st Platoon received only light attacks.

This was also the case on the left flank of How Company, where Second Lieutenant Ronald A. Mason's 2d Platoon saw little action as compared to the other two. A front of some 800 yards in the center of the 2300-yard Marine line, including two platoon positions and parts of two others, bore the brunt of the CCF assault on How and Item Companies.

Captain Corley had just visited his center platoon when the first attacks hit How Company. Second Lieutenant Wendell C. Endsley was killed while the company commander was on his way to Second Lieutenant Roscoe L. Barrett's 1st Platoon, on the right, which soon had its left flank heavily engaged.

Never was CCF skill at night attacks displayed more effectively. Barrett concluded that the Chinese actually rolled down the slope into

the How Company lines, so that they seemed to emerge from the very earth. The 3d Platoon, already thinned by accurate CCF white phosphorus mortar fire, was now further reduced in strength by grenades and burp gun bursts. About this time the company wire net went out and Corley could keep in touch with his platoons only by runners. The battalion telephone line also being cut, he reported his situation by radio to the Battalion CP.

Two wiremen were killed while trying to repair the line. The Chinese continued to come on in waves, each preceded by concentrations of light and heavy mortar fire on the right and center of the How Company position. About 0030 the enemy broke through in the 3d Platoon area and penetrated as far back as the Company CP. A scene of pandemonium ensued, the sound of Chinese trumpets and whistles adding to the confusion as it became difficult to tell friend from foe. "Tracers were so thick," recalled Sergeant Keith E. Davis, "that they lighted up the darkness like a Christmas tree."²¹

Corley and five enlisted men operated as a supporting fire team while First Lieutenant Harrison F. Betts rounded up as many men as he could find and tried to plug the gap in the 3d Platoon line. This outnumbered group was swept aside as the next wave of CCF attack carried to the rear of How Company and threatened the engineers at work under the floodlights.

A few Chinese actually broke through and fired at the Marines operating the dozers. Second Lieutenant Robert L. McFarland, the equipment officer, led a group of Dog Company engineers who counter-attacked and cleared the airstrip at the cost of a few casualties. Then the men resumed work under the floodlights.²²

The Battalion reserve, if such it could be called, consisted of any service troops who could be hastily gathered to meet the emergency. Shortly before midnight Ridge sent a platoon-strength group of X Corps signalmen and engineers under First Lieutenant Grady P. Mitchell to the aid of How Company. Mitchell was killed upon arrival and First Lieutenant Horace L. Johnson, Jr., deployed the reinforcements in a shallow ditch as a company reserve.

About midnight the fight had reached such a pitch of intensity that no spot in the perimeter was safe. The Company C medical clearing

²¹ K. E. Davis ltr, 20 Oct 55.

²² Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 45. Ridge Comments, 7 Jun 56, questions whether the floodlights were on during the whole attack.

station, only a few hundred yards to the rear of Item Company, was repeatedly hit by machine gun bullets whipping through the wooden walls as surgeons operated on the wounded. The Division CP also took hits, and a bullet which penetrated General Smith's quarters produced unusual sound effects when it ricocheted off pots and pans in the galley.²³

The Chinese seemed to be everywhere in the How Company zone. Shortly after midnight they surrounded the CP, portable galley and provision tent. "It is my personal opinion," commented Captain Corley, "that if the enemy had decided to effect a major breakthrough at this time, he would have experienced practically no difficulty. However, he seemed content to wander in and around the 3d Platoon, galley and hut areas."²⁴

The Chinese, in short, demonstrated that they knew better how to create a penetration than to exploit one. Once inside the How Company lines, they disintegrated into looting groups or purposeless tactical fragments. Clothing appealed most to the plunderers, and a wounded Marine in the 3d Platoon area saved his life by pretending to be dead while Communists stripped him of his parka.

About 0030 the Battalion CP advised Corley by radio that more reinforcements were on the way. Lieutenant Johnson met the contingent, comprising about 50 service troops, and guided them into the company area, where they were deployed as an added reserve to defend the airstrip.

Item Company was still having it hot and heavy but continued to beat off all CCF assaults. Elements of Weapons Company, manning the south road block, came under attack at 0115. Apparently a small enemy column had lost direction and blundered into a field of fire covered by heavy machine guns. The hurricane of Marine fire caught the Communists before they deployed and the result was virtual annihilation.

East Hill Lost to Enemy

Half an hour later, with the situation improving in the How Company zone, the Battalion CP had its first alarming reports of reverses on

²³ Smith, *Chronicle*, 93.

²⁴ Corley narrative.

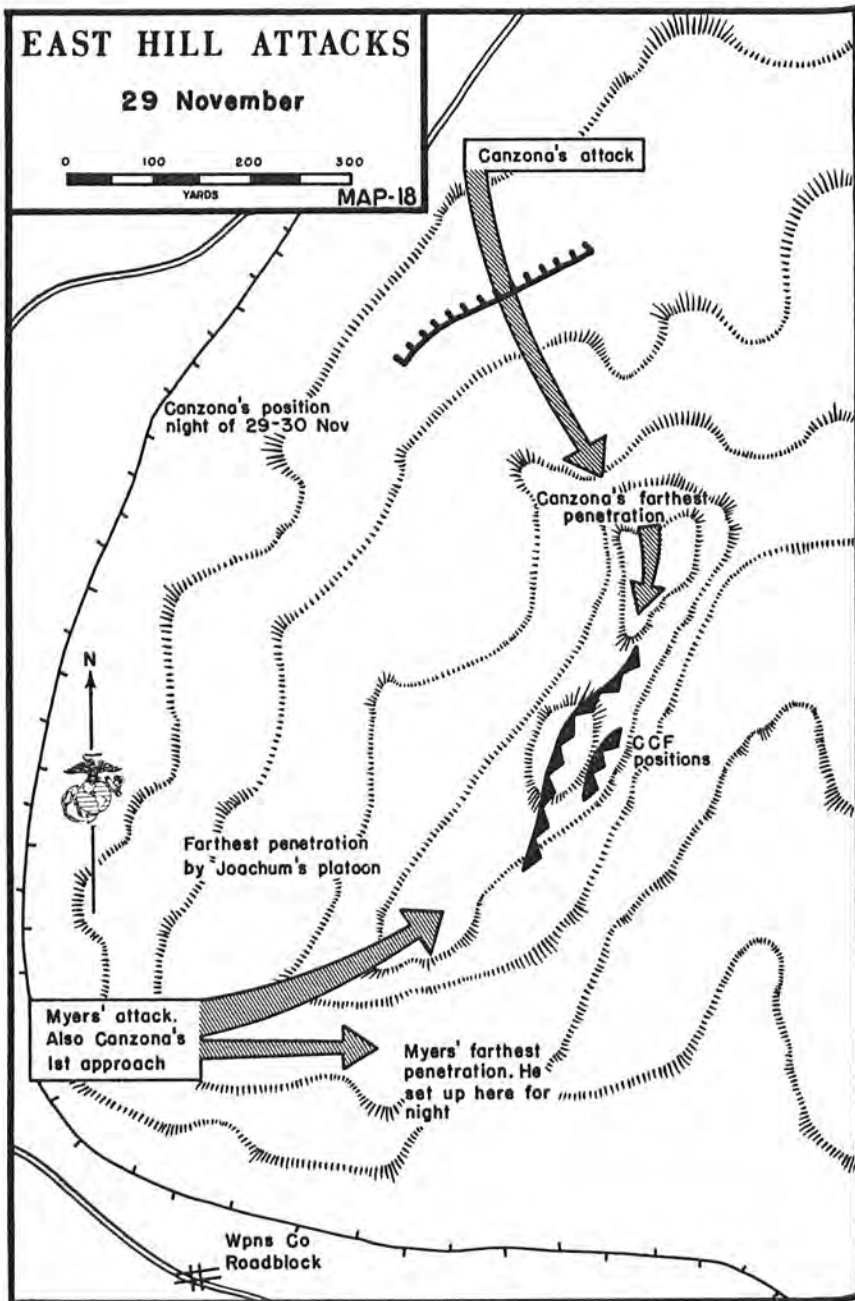
EAST HILL ATTACKS

29 November

0 100 200 300

YARDS

MAP-18



Canzona's attack

Canzona's position
night of 29-30 Nov

Canzona's farthest
penetration

CF
positions

Farthest penetration
by Joachim's platoon

Myers' attack.
Also Canzona's
1st approach

Myers' farthest
penetration. He
set up here for
night

Wpns Co
Roadblock

East Hill. The terrain itself had offered difficulties to men scrambling up the steep, icy slopes with heavy burdens of ammunition. These detachments of service troops, moreover, included a large proportion of newly recruited ROKs who had little training and understood no English.

The largest of the East Hill units, Company D of the 10th Engineer Combat Battalion, commanded by Captain Philip A. Kulbes, USA, was composed of 77 American enlisted men and 90 ROKS. Combat equipment (in addition to individual weapons) consisted of four .50 caliber machine guns, five light .30 caliber machine guns, and six 3.5 rocket launchers.²⁵

The Army engineers had arrived at Hagaru at 1200 on the 28th, shortly before the enemy cut the MSR. After being assigned to the East Hill sector during the afternoon, the company used the few remaining hours of daylight to move vehicles and gear back to an equipment park in the perimeter. It was 2030 before the four platoons got into position on East Hill after an exhausting climb in the darkness with heavy loads of ammunition. Some use was made of existing holes, but most of the men were not dug in when the Chinese attacked.

On the left the collapse of a ROK platoon attached to X Corps Headquarters led rapidly to confusion everywhere on East Hill. Captain Shelnutt, the Marine officer assigned to the Army engineers, found that he could not close the gap by extending the line to the left. Nor did the men, particularly the ROKs, have the training to side-slip to the left under fire and beat off flank attacks. The consequence was a general withdrawal on East Hill, attended in some instances by demoralization. Shelnutt was killed as the four engineer platoons fell back some 250 yards in "a tight knot," according to Lieutenant Norman R. Rosen, USA, commander of the 3d Platoon.

This was the situation as reported by the Marine radio operator, PFC Bruno Podolak, who voluntarily remained as an observer at his post, now behind enemy lines. At 0230 a telephone call to Colonel Bowser from the 3/1 CP was recorded in the message blank as follows:

"How Company still catching hell and are about ready to launch counterattack to restore line. About an hour ago, enemy appeared on

²⁵ References to Co D, 10th Engr Bn, USA, are based on Lt Norman R. Rosen, "Combat Comes Suddenly," in Capt John G. Westover, Ed., *Combat Support in Korea* (Washington, 1955), 206-208.

East Hill. A group of enemy sneaked up to a bunch of Banks' men and hand-grenaded hell out of them and took position. Sending executive officer over to see if we can get some fire on that area. Should be able to restore the line but liable to be costly. Reserve practically nil. Do have a backstop behind the break in How lines on this side of airstrip, composed of engineers and other odds and ends."²⁶

At 0400 there was little to prevent the enemy from making a complete breakthrough on East Hill and attacking the Division CP and the supply dumps. A friendly foothold had been retained on reverse slopes of the southern nose, but the northern part was held only by artillery fires. Along the road at the bottom of East Hill a thin line of service troops with several tanks and machine guns formed a weak barrier.

All indications point to the fact that the Chinese themselves were not in sufficient strength to follow up their success. Their attack on East Hill was apparently a secondary and diversionary effort in support of the main assault on the sectors held by How and Item Companies. At any rate, the enemy contented himself with holding the high ground he had won.

Some of the defenders of East Hill had fought with bravery which is the more admirable because of their lack of combat training. Battle is a business for specialists, and Lieutenant Rosen relates that the Army engineers "had a great deal of difficulty with our weapons because they were cold and fired sluggishly. We had gone into action so unexpectedly that it had not occurred to us to clean the oil off our weapons." As an example of the difficulties imposed by the language barrier, the officers were given to understand by the ROKs that they had no more ammunition. "Weeks later," commented Rosen, "we found that most of them had not fired their ammunition this night, but continued to carry it."²⁷

In view of such circumstances, the service troops put up a creditable if losing fight in the darkness on East Hill. The 77 Americans of the Army engineer company suffered losses of 10 KIA, 25 WIA, and nine MIA; and of the 90 ROKs, about 50 were killed, wounded, or missing, chiefly the latter.²⁸

²⁶ 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 0230 29 Nov 50.

²⁷ Rosen, "Combat Comes Suddenly," 209.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 209-210; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CG X Corps, 1445 29 Nov 50.

The Volcano of Supporting Fires

As usual, the men in the thick of the fight saw only what happened in their immediate area. The scene as a whole was witnessed by a young Marine officer of Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion, on duty at a sawmill two miles north of Hagaru. From the high ground he could look south down into the perimeter, and the awesome spectacle of a night battle made him think of a volcano in eruption. Gun flashes stabbing the darkness were fused into a great ring of living flame, and the thousands of explosions blended into one steady, low-pitched roar.²⁹

Seldom in Marine history have supporting arms played as vital a part as during this night at Hagaru. It is possible that a disaster was averted on East Hill when the Marines of Captain Benjamin S. Read's How Battery shifted trails and plugged the hole in the line with howitzer fires alone. Lieutenant Colonel Banks and Major Walter T. Warren, commanding the antitank company of the 7th Marines, acted as observers. Reporting by telephone to the gun pits, they directed the sweating gunners so accurately that an enemy attack would have come up against a curtain of fire.³⁰

Captain Strohmenger's Dog Battery had been attached to 3/1 so long that a high degree of co-ordination existed. His 105s fired about 1200 rounds that night, and POW interrogations disclosed that enemy concentrations in rear areas were repeatedly broken up.

When CCF guns replied, shortly before midnight, there was danger of a fuel or ammunition dump being hit and starting a chain reaction of detonations in the crowded perimeter. Strohmenger ordered five of his howitzers to cease fire while he moved the sixth out about 150 yards to act as a decoy. Its flashes drew fire from the enemy, as he had hoped, revealing the positions of the Chinese artillery. Dog Battery officers set up two aiming circles and calculated the range and deflection. Then the command was given for all six Marine howitzers to open up. The enemy guns were silenced for the night. A later survey established that two CCF 76mm guns had been destroyed and two others removed.³¹

The 60mm mortars of the two rifle companies fired a total of more than 3200 rounds; and on both fronts the heavy machine guns of Weapons Company added tremendously to the fire power. Illuminating

²⁹ Narrative of Capt N. A. Canzona, 28 Mar 56.

³⁰ Capt Benjamin S. Read (as told to Hugh Morrow): "Our Guns Never Got Cold," *Saturday Evening Post*, ccxxiii (7 Apr 51), 145.

³¹ Strohmenger ltr, 17 Aug 55.

shells being scarce, two Korean houses on the Item Company's front were set ablaze by orders of Lieutenant Fisher. The flames seemed to attract CCF soldiers like moths, and the machine guns of the two tanks stationed here reaped a deadly harvest. Curiously enough, the Chinese apparently did not realize what excellent targets they made when silhouetted against the burning buildings.

By 0400 it was evident that the enemy's main effort had failed. No further attacks of any consequence were sustained by the two rifle companies. It remained only to dispose of the unwelcome CCF visitors sealed off in the How Company zone, and at 0420 Captain Corley rounded up men for a counterattack.

"It will be just as dark for them as for us," he told his NCOs.

Second Lieutenant Edward W. Snelling was directed to fire all his remaining 60mm mortar ammunition in support. Corley and Betts led the service troops sent as reinforcements while Johnson advanced on the left. A bitter fight of extermination ensued, and by 0630 the MLR had been restored. How Company, which sustained the heaviest losses of any Marine unit that night, had a total of 16 men killed and 39 wounded, not including attached units.³²

After it was all over, the stillness had a strange impact on ears attuned the whole night long to the thump of mortars and clatter of machine guns. The harsh gray light of dawn revealed the unforgettable spectacle of hundreds of Chinese dead heaped up in front of the two Marine rifle companies.³³ Shrouds of new white snow covered many of them, and crimson trails showed where the wounded had made their way to the rear.

Marine Attacks on East Hill

But even though the enemy's main attack had failed, his secondary effort on East Hill represented a grave threat to perimeter security. At 0530 Ridge decided to counterattack, and Major Reginald R. Myers volunteered to lead an assault column composed of all reserves who could be scraped together for the attempt.

It was broad daylight before the Battalion executive officer moved out with an assortment of Marine, Army, and ROK service troops, some

³² Corley and Barrett narratives.

³³ POW reports stated that the Chinese assault force in this sector had been one regiment. CIC tel to G-2 1stMarDiv, 1715 29 Nov 50.

of them stragglers from the night's withdrawals from East Hill (see Map 18). Their total strength compared to that of an infantry company. About 55 separate units were represented at Hagaru, many by splinter groups, so that most of Myers' men were strangers to one another as well as to their officers and NCOs.

The largest Marine group was the platoon led by First Lieutenant Robert E. Jochums, assistant operations officer of the 1st Engineer Battalion. Clerks, typists, and truck drivers were included along with Company D engineers. Armed with carbines or M-1s and two grenades apiece, the men carried all the small arms ammunition they could manage. Few had had recent combat experience and the platoon commander knew only one of them personally—a company clerk whom he made his runner.

It was typical of the informality attending this operation that a Marine NCO with a small group attached themselves to Jochums, giving him a total of about 45. They had an exhausting, 45-minute climb up the hill to the line of departure, where Myers directed them to attack on the left of his main force.

The early morning fog enshrouded East Hill and Myers' attack had to wait until it cleared. The jump-off line lay along a steep slope with little or no cover. From the outset the advancing troops were exposed to scattered small-arms fire as well as grenades which needed only to be rolled downhill. New snow covering the old icy crust made for treacherous footing, so that the heavily laden men took painful falls.

Myers' little task force can scarcely be considered a tactical organization. His close air support was excellent; but both artillery and mortar support were lacking. Jochums did not notice any weapons save small arms and grenades.

"Our plane assaults were very effective, especially the napalm attacks," he commented on the basis of a personal log kept at the time. "During these strikes, either live or dry runs, the enemy troops in the line of fire would often rise and run from their positions to those in the rear."³⁴

Marine air came on station at 0930 as VMF-312 planes peeled off to hit the enemy with napalm and bombs. The squadron flew 31 sorties that day at Hagaru, nearly all in the East Hill area. Enemy small-arms fire crippled one aircraft; but the pilot, First Lieutenant Harry W.

³⁴ Capt R. E. Jochums ltr, 16 Dec 55; Myers Comments.

Colmery, escaped serious injuries by making a successful crash landing within the perimeter.³⁵

All accounts agree that the ground forces met more serious opposition from the terrain at times than from the enemy. So cut up into ridges and ravines was this great hill mass that the troops seldom knew whether they were advancing in defilade or exposing themselves to the fire of hidden adversaries. Thus the attack became a lethal game of hide-and-seek in which a step to the right or left might make the difference between life and death. On the other hand, when the Corsairs provided shooting gallery targets by flushing out opponents, only a few men could get into effective firing position along the narrow, restricted ridges before the Communists scuttled safely to new cover.

It took most of the energies of the attackers to keep on toiling upward, gasping for breath, clutching at bushes for support, and sweating at every pore in spite of the cold. At noon, after snail-like progress, the force was still far short of the main ridge recognized as the dividing line between friendly forces and the enemy. By this time more than half of Myers' composite company had melted away as a result of casualties and exhaustion. Jochums saw no more than 15 wounded men in the attacking force during the day. He noted about the same number of dead Chinese. As for enemy strength, he estimated that the total may have amounted to a company or slightly more.

It was his conviction that "three well organized platoons could have pressed the assault without serious consequences and seized the immediate highest objective. What was behind that I am unable to say, but I feel that taking this high ground would have solved the problem."³⁶

Most of the friendly casualties were caused by the grenades and grazing machine-gun fire of concealed opponents who had the law of gravity fighting on their side. Jochums was painfully wounded in the foot but continued with his platoon. "The age-old problem of leadership in such an operation," he concluded, "may be compared to moving a piece of string—pulling it forward will get you farther than pushing."

Enemy small-arms fire increased in volume when Myers' remnants, estimated at 75 men, reached the military crest of the decisive ridge. There the groups in the center and on the right were halted by the Chinese holding the topographical crest and reverse slope. On the left Jochums' men managed to push on to an outlying spur before being

³⁵ VMF-312 SAR, 15-16.

³⁶ Myers Comments state: "High ground was taken. But [we] could not control movement of the enemy on the reverse side. As a result [we] could not stay on top."

stopped by CCF fire from a ridge to the northeast. Jochums' position was still short of the commanding high ground, yet it was destined to be the point of farthest penetration on East Hill.

Myers ordered his men to take what cover they could find and draw up a defensive line "short of the topographical crest" while awaiting a supporting attack.³⁷ This was to be carried out by elements of Captain George W. King's Able Company of the 1st Engineer Battalion, which had been stationed at a sawmill two miles north of Hagaru to repair a blown bridge. These troops reached the perimeter without incident at noon and proceeded immediately to the assault.

First Lieutenant Nicholas A. Canzona's 1st Platoon led the column. Orders were to ascend the southwestern slope of East Hill, pass through Myers' force and clear the ridge line. But after completing an exhausting climb to the military crest, the engineer officer was directed to retrace his steps to the foot. There Captain King informed him that a new attack had been ordered on the opposite flank, from a starting point about 1000 yards to the northeast.

Moving to the indicated route of approach, Canzona began his second ascent with two squads in line, pushing up a spur and a draw which became almost perpendicular as it neared the topographical crest. Only his skeleton platoon of about 20 men was involved. There were neither radios nor supporting arms, and a light machine gun was the sole weapon in addition to small arms and grenades.

Upon reaching the military crest, the engineers were pinned down by CCF machine-gun fire along a trail a few feet wide, with nearly vertical sides. Only Canzona, Staff Sergeant Stanley B. McPherson and PFC Eugene B. Schlegel had room for "deployment," and they found the platoon's one machine gun inoperative after it was laboriously passed up from the rear. Schlegel was wounded and rolled downhill like a log, unconscious from loss of blood.

Another machine gun, sent up from the foot, enabled the platoon to hold its own even though it could not advance. Canzona put in a request by runner for mortar support, but only two 81mm rounds were delivered after a long delay. It was late afternoon when he walked downhill to consult King, who had just been ordered to withdraw Company A to a reverse slope position. Canzona returned to his men and pulled them back about half-way down the slope while McPherson covered the retirement with machine-gun fire. The winter sun was

³⁷ Myers Comments.

sinking when the weary engineers set up a night defense, and at that moment the howitzers of How Battery cut loose with point-detonation and proximity bursts which hit the Chinese positions with deadly accuracy.

Canzona estimated the enemy strength in his zone at no more than a platoon, which might have been dislodged with the aid of artillery or even mortar fire.³⁸

About 500 yards south of the engineers, Major Myers held a defensive position with his remaining force of about two platoons. The Battalion CP had reason to believe that the outposts on East Hill would be relieved shortly by George Company, with the 41st Commando in perimeter reserve. Both had departed Koto-ri that morning in a strong convoy which also included an Army infantry company, four platoons of Marine tanks, and the last serial of Division Headquarters Battalion.

It was still touch and go at Hagaru at dusk on the 29th, but the defenders could take satisfaction in having weathered the enemy's first onslaught. General Smith, courteous and imperturbable as always, visited the Battalion CP to commend Ridge and his officers for the night's work. Two rifle companies had inflicted a bloody repulse on several times their own numbers, and the counterattacking forces on East Hill had at least hung on by their eyelashes.

In the final issue, a bob-tailed rifle battalion, two artillery batteries and an assortment of service troops had stood off a CCF division identified as the 58th and composed of the 172d, 173d, and 174th Infantry Regiments reinforced with organic mortars and some horse-drawn artillery. Chinese prisoners reported that the 172d, taking the principal part in the attacks on How and Item Companies, had suffered 90 per cent casualties. Elements of the 173d were believed to have figured to a lesser extent, with the 174th being kept in reserve.³⁹

This was the situation in the early darkness of 29 November, when the disturbing news reached Hagaru that George Company and the Commandos were being heavily attacked on the road from Koto-ri and had requested permission to turn back.

³⁸ Canzona narrative, 28 Mar 56. Col Brower points out that the Chinese positions were defiladed from artillery fire. Col J. H. Brower Comments, n. d.

³⁹ 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 9-10; Ridge, *Notes*; Carey narrative.

CHAPTER XI

CCF Attacks on 2/1 at Koto-ri—Convoy Reinforced by Marine Tanks—The Fight in Hell Fire Valley—Attack of George Company on East Hill—High Level Command Conference—CCF Attacks of 1 December at Hagaru—Rescue of U. S. Army Wounded—First Landings on Hagaru Airstrip

Task Force Drysdale

BEFORE THE CHINESE struck at Yudam-ni, they had penetrated 35 miles farther south along the MSR. At Chinhung-ni, on the night of 26 November, the Marines of the 1st Battalion, RCT-1, exchanged shots in the darkness with several elusive enemy groups making "light probing attacks."

Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Schmuck, the new battalion commander, had set up a defensive perimeter upon arrival with his three rifle companies reinforced by 4.2-inch mortar and 75mm recoilless rifle platoons.¹ The identity of the enemy on the night of the 26th was not suspected, and patrols the next day made no contacts. At 1900 on the 27th, however, another light attack on the perimeter was repulsed. During the next two days, patrol actions definitely established that Chinese in estimated battalion strength were in a mountain valley to the west, hiding in houses by day and probing by night apparently in preparation for a determined attack.

Schmuck decided to strike first. On the 29th, a Baker Company reconnaissance patrol searched out the enemy positions, and the next day the battalion commander led an attacking force composed of Captain Barrow's Able Company and part of Captain Noren's Baker Com-

¹ This section is based upon the following sources: 1stMar SAR, 13-14; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 13, 1-2; VMF-312 SAR, 16; LtCol D. M. Schmuck interv, 2 Apr 56; Maj W. L. Bates, Jr., interv by HistDiv HQMC, 16 Mar 53; Col D. M. Schmuck Comments, n. d.

pany, reinforced by 81mm and 4.2-inch mortars under the direction of Major William L. Bates, Jr., commanding the Weapons Company.

While First Lieutenant Howard A. Blancheri's Fox Battery of 2/11 laid down supporting fires, the infantry "ran the Chinese right out of the country," according to Major Bates' account. "We burned all the houses they had been living in and brought the civilians back with us. We had no more difficulty with the Chinese from that valley."

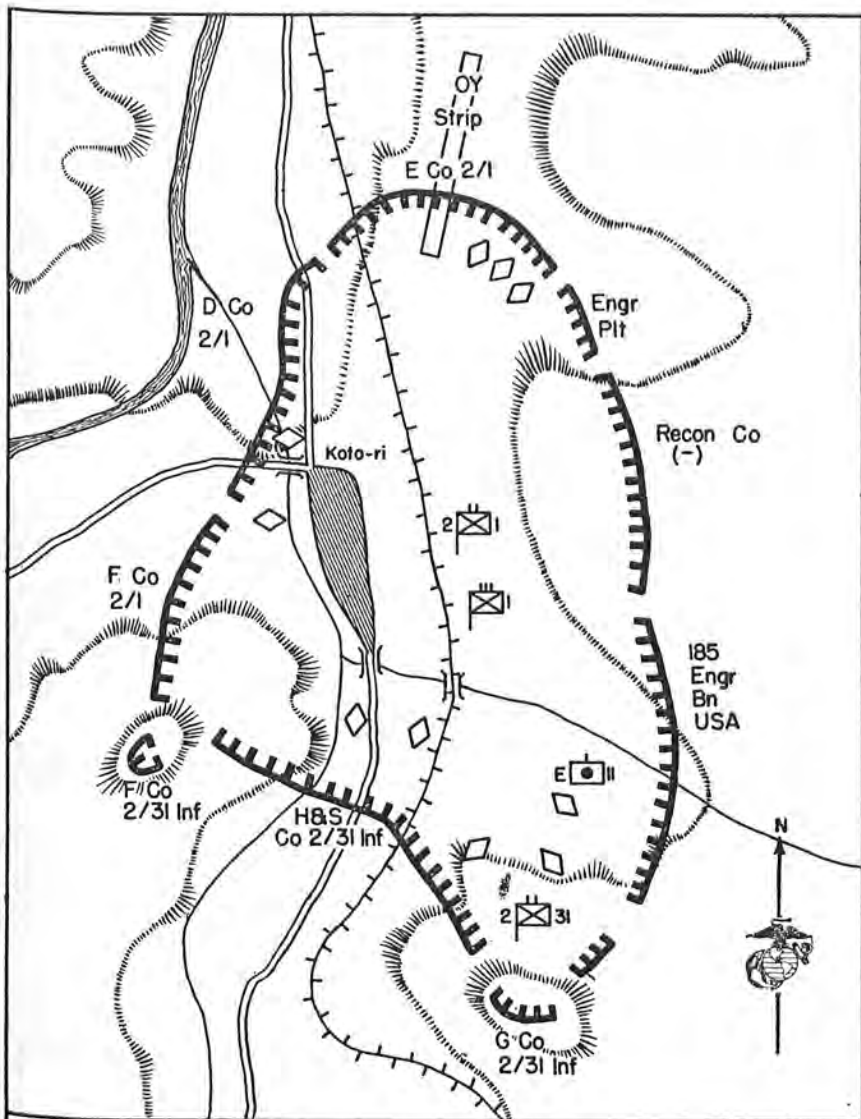
The Communists were found to be warmly clothed in new padded cotton uniforms and armed with American weapons presumably captured from the Nationalists. An estimated 56 were killed by the ground forces before the Corsairs of VMF-312 took up a relentless pursuit which lasted until the enemy remnants scattered into hiding. Some of the Chinese were mounted on shaggy Mongolian ponies.²

CCF Attacks on 2/1 at Koto-ri

During this same period, Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's 2d Battalion of RCT-1 had several hard-fought encounters with the new enemy. After arriving at Koto-ri on the 24th, he set up a perimeter defense facing west, north, and east which included a 4.2-inch Mortar Platoon as well as Easy Battery of 2/11, commanded by Captain John C. McClelland, Jr. Some commanding ground was left unoccupied, but Sutter believed that a tight perimeter offered advantages over widely separated blocking positions. In addition to 2/1, the regimental CP and H&S Company, the AT Company (-), the 4.2 Mortar Company (-), Company D of the 1st Medical Battalion and the 2d Battalion of the 11th Marines (less Batteries D and F) were at Koto-ri.

The perimeter, second in importance only to Hagaru as a base, was to be jammed during the next few days with hundreds of Marine and Army troops held up by CCF roadblocks to the north. On 27 November, the enemy made his presence known. A motorized patrol of platoon strength from Captain Jack A. Smith's Easy Company, supported by a section of tanks, engaged in a fire fight with about 25 Chinese in the hills west of Koto-ri. Two wounded CCF soldiers were left behind by the dispersed enemy. At this point the patrol proceeded on foot until it was stopped by the fire of an estimated 200 Communists dug in along

² Schmuck Comments.



KOTO-RI PERIMETER

28 November - 7 December

RAILROAD

TANKS

500 400 300 200 100 0

500

YARDS

MAP-19

ridge lines. At 1600 the Marines returned to the perimeter with two men wounded.

Enemy losses were reported as eight killed and 15 wounded in addition to the two prisoners. Upon being questioned, these Chinese asserted that they belonged to a Chinese division assembling to the west of Koto-ri with a headquarters in a mine shaft.³

There could be no doubt the next day that the enemy had swarmed into the area in fairly large numbers. A Marine outpost on a hill north-east of the perimeter received heavy small-arms fire at 0845 and was reinforced by a platoon from Easy Company. Finally these troops had to be withdrawn and an air strike called on the hill to evict the enemy.

At 1058 General Smith ordered Colonel Puller to push a force up the MSR to make contact with the tank patrol being sent south from Hagaru and to clear the MSR.⁴ Groups of Chinese, sighted during the day to the north, west and east, were taken under artillery fire by Captain McClelland's battery. Reconnaissance planes landing at the Koto-ri OY strip reported CCF roadblocks on the way to Hagaru; and at 1330 Captain Gildo S. Codispoti, the S-3, dispatched Captain Welby W. Cronk's Dog Company in vehicles with orders to open up the route. Following in Dog Company's wake came the last serial of Division Headquarters troops, on its way to Hagaru.⁵

Less than a mile north of the perimeter, the convoy ran into a storm of rifle and automatic weapons fire from Chinese entrenched along the high ground on both sides of the road. The Marines of Dog Company piled out of their vehicles and deployed for a hot fire fight, supported from Koto-ri by 81mm mortars of Captain William A. Kerr's Weapons Company. Two platoons swung around to clear the enemy from the ridge. The other platoon and the Headquarters troops advanced along the road.

At 1615 a platoon from Captain Goodwin C. Groff's Fox Company was ordered out to assist in evacuating casualties. But as the afternoon wore on, it grew apparent that the Chinese were in greater strength than had been anticipated, and all troops were directed to return to Koto-ri at 1735. They did so under cover of strikes by the Corsairs of VMF-312.

³ 1stMar SAR, 14, and appendix 10, 6; CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1815 and 1930 27 Nov 50.

⁴ CG 1stMarDiv msg to CO 1stMar, 1058 28 Nov 50.

⁵ The remainder of this section is based upon: 2/1 SAR, 12-13; HqBn URpt 12. LtCol J. C. McClelland, Jr., ltr, 21 Feb 56; Col A. Sutter Comments, n. d.

Marine losses numbered four KIA or DOW and 34 WIA. Enemy casualties were estimated at 154 killed and 83 wounded in addition to three prisoners taken from a unit identified as the 179th Regiment of the 60th CCF Division. Captured Chinese weapons included 130 rifles, 25 machine guns, and two cases of grenades.

That evening George Company of 3/1, 41st Commando, Royal Marines, and Baker Company of the 31st Infantry, 7th Infantry Division, arrived at Koto-ri on their way to Hagaru (see Map 20). Colonel Puller and his S-3, Major Lorigan, organized the newcomers into a task force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Drysdale, CO of the British unit, with orders to fight its way to Hagaru the following day.

Luckily the enemy did not elect to attack the overcrowded perimeter on the night of the 28th. Every warming tent was packed to capacity, and a CCF mortar round could hardly have landed anywhere without doing a good deal of damage.

After a quiet night the Chinese began the new day by digging emplacements in the hills to the west under harassing fire from F Company. The howitzers of Easy Battery and the mortars of 2/1 provided supporting fires for Task Force Drysdale when it moved out at 0945 followed by a convoy of Division Headquarters troops. A platoon of Easy Company, 2/1, went along with corpsmen and ambulances to assist in evacuating any early wounded back to Koto-ri. Stubborn CCF resistance resulted in casualties from the outset, and it was 1600 before the Easy Company escort platoon got back to the perimeter.

The Chinese, keeping the perimeter under observation all day, evidently concluded that the northern rim, defended by Easy Company, offered the best opportunity for a penetration. Marine air strikes were called on the Chinese swarming over the near-by high ground during the last minutes of daylight, but enemy mortar rounds hit Easy Company at 1745. They were followed by bugle calls and whistle signals as the CCF infantry attacked from the high ground to the northeast.

The assault force was estimated at company strength, with the remainder of a battalion in reserve. Unfortunately for the Chinese, they had made their intentions clear all day with unusual activity in the surrounding hills, and Easy Company was not surprised. Major Clarence J. Mabry, the 2/1 executive officer, could be heard above the machine guns as he shouted encouragement to Marines who poured it into the advancing Communists. They came on with such persistence that 17

managed to penetrate within the lines, apparently to attack the warming tents.⁶ All were killed. In addition, about 150 CCF bodies lay in front of the sector when the enemy withdrew at 1855, after suffering a complete repulse.

It was conjectured that the Chinese had interpreted the return of the Easy Company platoon late that afternoon as an indication that a gap in the line needed to be hastily plugged. But the supposed weak spot did not materialize, and at 1935 the enemy signed off for the night after pumping four final mortar rounds in the vicinity of the Battalion CP without doing any harm. Losses of 2/1 for the day were six KIA and 18 WIA, total CCF casualties being estimated at 175 killed and 200 wounded. Ten heavy machine guns, seven LMGs, 12 Thompson sub-machine guns, 76 rifles, four pistols, and 500 grenades were captured.

That was all at Koto-ri, where Recon Company arrived during the day to add its weight to the defense. But during intervals of silence the sound of heavy and continuous firing to the north gave proof that Task Force Drysdale was in trouble.

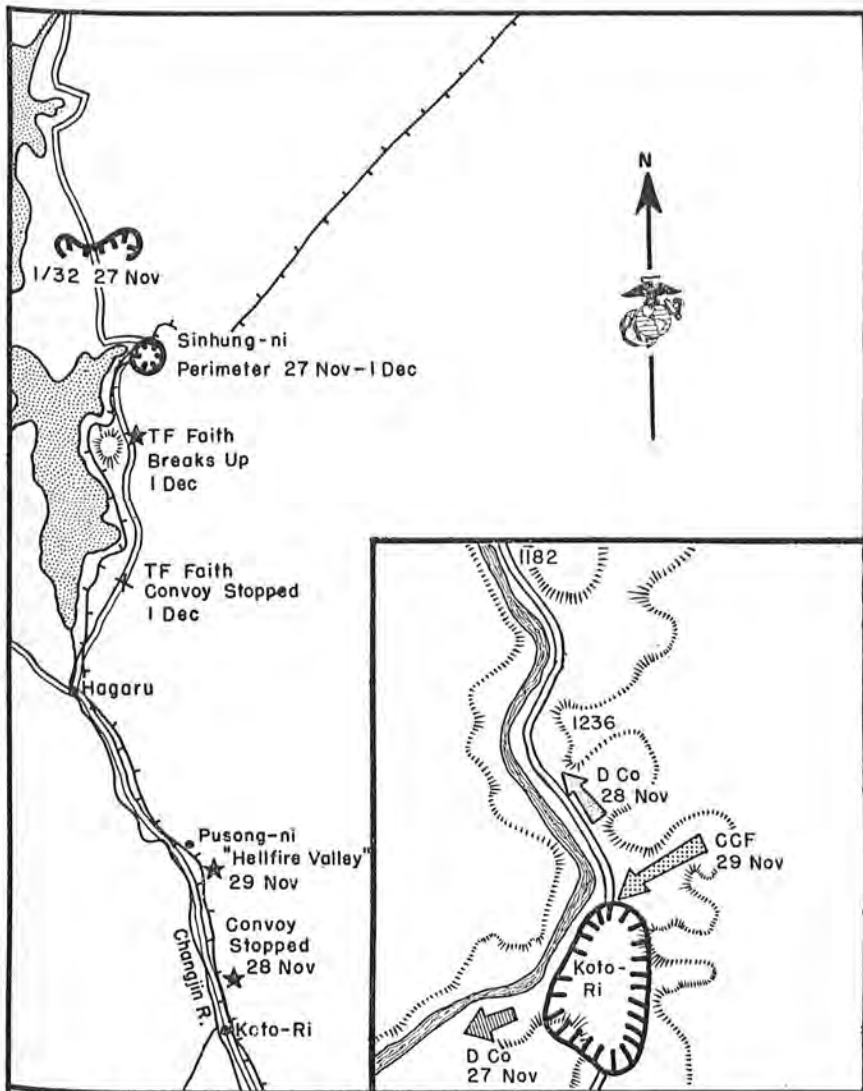
Convoy Reinforced by Marine Tanks

Lieutenant Colonel Drysdale's plan of attack had called for his British Marines to lead out at 0930 and seize the first hill mass to the east of the road. Captain Sitter's George Company of 3/1 was to follow and pass through to attack Hill 1236, with Baker Company of the 31st Infantry in reserve. LtCol Sutter, assisted by his staff, had the responsibility for planning and coordinating preparatory artillery and mortar fires from Koto-ri and attaching an air liaison officer to the task force.⁷

The first hill was taken without meeting serious resistance, but Sitter came up against well entrenched CCF troops when he attacked Hill 1236, about a mile and a half north of Koto-ri. It was nip and tuck until Master Sergeant Rocco A. Zullo fired his 3.5 rocket launcher at a

⁶ LtCol R. E. Lorigan Comments, 16 May 56.

⁷ Unless otherwise specified, this section is based on: CO 41st Commando Ltr to CG 1stMarDiv, 30 Nov 50; 1stTkBn SAR, 23-27; Smith, *Notes*, 859-868; Maj C. L. Sitter ltr to Col T. L. Ridge, 4 Oct 55; TSgt G. D. Pendas ltr to HistBr G-3, 18 Dec 55; Narrative of Capt M. J. Capraro, 2 Feb 56; Narrative of Capt J. D. Buck, 27 Jan 56; LtCol D. B. Drysdale, RM, "41 Commando," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvii no. 8 (Aug 51), 28-32; 1stMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1705 29 Nov 50; and Lt Alfred J. Catania, "Truck Platoon in Korea," in Westover, *Combat Support in Korea*, 53-57; LtCol D. B. Drysdale, RM, Comments, n. d.



ATTEMPTS TO REINFORCE HAGARU 28 November - 1 December

==== Roads
 + + + + Railroads

★ Firefights

5000 0 5000
 YARDS

MAP-20

range of 200 yards. Several rounds brought the Chinese out of their holes and the Marines took possession of the hill.

The Commandos and George Company moved up about a mile astride of the road toward the third objective, Hill 1182. There the enemy resisted strenuously with well-placed mortar as well as machine-gun fire from strong positions on the high ground. The impetus of the attack had been stopped when Sitter received orders from the task force commander to break off action, withdraw to the road, and await new instructions.

Drysdale had received a message from RCT-1 at 1130 advising him that the armor of Company D (less 2d platoon), 1st Tank Battalion, would be available to him at 1300. He decided to wait, therefore, and re-form the column before continuing the advance.

The two platoons of Company D tanks, reinforced by the tank platoon of the AT Company, RCT-5, reached Koto-ri at noon after moving out that morning from Majon-dong. Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, departed Tongjong-ni, just south of Majon-dong, but did not arrive at Koto-ri until 1500. The 2d Platoon being attached to Sutter's battalion, the remainder of the company was directed to bring up the rear of the Task Force Drysdale, which by that time had renewed its attack. Thus the convoy was made up of the following components, including the elements which joined in the late afternoon of 29 November:

Unit	Estimated Strength	Estimated Vehicles	Estimated Tanks
41 Ind. Commando, RM.....	235	-----	-----
Co. G, 3/1.....	205	-----	-----
Co. B, 31st Infantry, USA.....	190	22	-----
Det. Div. Hq. Bn.....	62	17	-----
Det. 1st Sig. Bn.....	8	4	-----
Det. 7th MT Bn. ¹	12	22	-----
Det. Serv. Co., 1st Tank Bn.....	18	31	-----
Co. B(-), 1st Tank Bn.....	86	23	12
Co. D(-), 1st Tank Bn.....	77	22	12
Tank Plat., AT Co., RCT-5.....	29	-----	5
Total.....	922	141	29

¹ Trailers are included among the vehicles. George Company, 3/1, lacked organic transport and was mounted in the vehicles of 7thMTBn. For similar reasons ServCo, 1stTkBn, supplied the transportation for the 41st Commando and 377th Transportation Truck Company, USA, for B/31stInf.

At 1350 the head of the column had resumed the advance, with the order of march as shown below:

D/TKs & AT/5	—	G/1	—	41 Cmdo	—	B/31	—	HqBn	—	B/TKs
17 tks		22 veh		31 veh		22 veh		66 veh		12 tks

Shortly after moving out, Sitter's men were hit by heavy small-arms fire from houses on the right of the road. The company commander went forward and requested the tanks to open up with their 90mm guns, and the Chinese flushed out of the houses were destroyed by machine-gun fire.

Progress was slow because of the necessity of further halts while the tanks blasted out pockets of CCF resistance. Enemy mortar as well as small-arms fire was encountered, and a round scored a direct hit on one of the trucks carrying personnel of 3d Platoon of George Company, wounding every man in the vehicle.

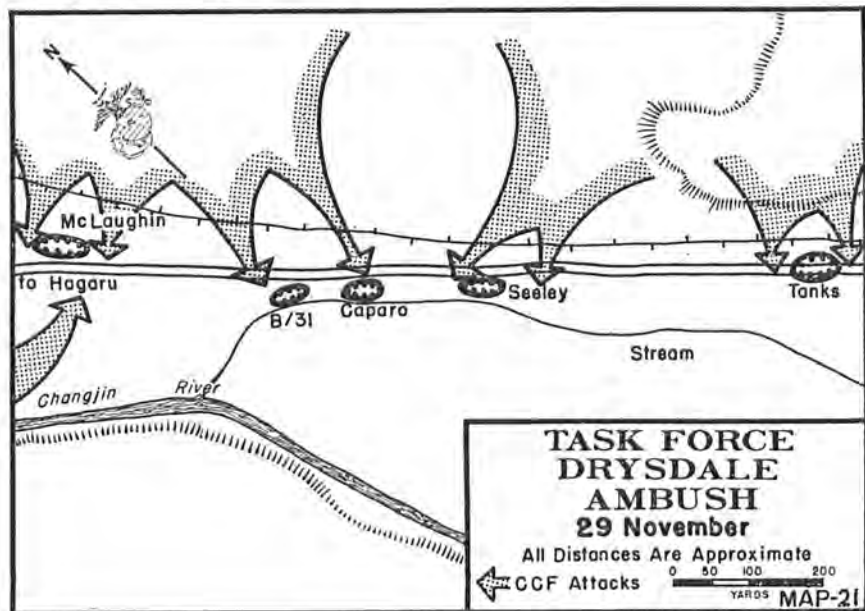
Further delays resulted while the tanks made their way over road-blocks or around craters. For the three infantry companies, the advance consisted of brief periods of movement alternated with interludes in which the troops scrambled out of the trucks to engage in fire fights. Finally, about 1615, the column ground to a complete halt about four miles north of Koto-ri. At that time the tanks of Company B were just leaving the 2/1 perimeter to join the convoy.

The Fight in Hell Fire Valley

Drysdale and Sitter were informed by the tank officers that they thought the armor could get through, but that further movement for the trucks was inadvisable in view of road conditions and increasing enemy resistance. The task force commander requested a decision from Division Headquarters as to whether he should resume an advance which threatened to prove costly. It was a difficult choice for General Smith to make, but in view of the urgent necessity for reinforcements at Hagaru he directed Drysdale to continue.⁸

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, the sources for this section are the same as the preceding, plus: Statement of Capt M. C. Capraro, 12 Feb 51; MSgt E. F. Grayson, Sgt E. J. Keeton, and Cpl E. McCardell interv by Capt K. A. Shutts, 17 Feb 51; Capt M. C. Capraro interv by Capt Shutts, 11 Feb 51; CWO D. R. Yancey interv by Capt Shutts, 11 Feb 51; Sgt C. W. Dickerson, Cpl C. W. Williams, Sgt M. L. Estess, SSgt J. B. Nash, and TSgt C. L. Harrison interv by HistDiv HQMC, 25-31 Jul 51; Col H. S. Walseth interv by Capt Shutts, 26 Jan 51; LtCol J. N. McLaughlin Comments, 5 Nov 56. Nash, Harrison, Dickerson, Estess, and Williams were among the men captured with McLaughlin. They escaped from Chinese imprisonment several months later.

The tanks had to refuel, so that more time was lost. CCF fire was only moderate during this delay, thanks to the air strikes of VMF-321 planes directed by Captain Norman Vining. When the column stopped, the vehicles had pulled off into a dry stream bed. Upon resuming the advance, unit integrity was lost and infantry elements mingled with headquarters troops.



Not far south of the halfway point to Hagaru, increased enemy fire caused an abrupt halt in a long valley. The high ground rose sharply on the right of the road, while on the left a frozen creek wound through a plain several hundred yards wide, bordered by the Changjin River and wooded hills. This was Hell Fire Valley—a name applied by Drysdale—and it was to be the scene of an all-night fight by half the men of the convoy (see Map 21).

Such a possibility was far from their thoughts when they piled out of the trucks once more, as they had done repeatedly all day, to return the enemy's fire. It did not even seem significant when an enemy mortar shell set one of the trucks in flames at the far end of the valley, thus creating a roadblock and splitting the column. The enemy took advantage of the opportunity to pour in small-arms and mortar fire which pinned down the troops taking cover behind vehicles or in the roadside

ditches and prevented removal of the damaged truck. During this interlude the head of the column, consisting of Dog/Tanks, George Company, nearly three-fourths of the 41st Commando and a few Army infantrymen, continued the advance, with Drysdale in command, in obedience to orders to proceed to Hagaru at all costs. Left behind in Hell Fire Valley were 61 Commandos, most of Company B, 31st Infantry, and practically all the Division Headquarters and Service troops.

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Chidester, assistant Division G-4 and senior officer caught south of the roadblock, ordered the barred vehicles to turn around and attempt a return to Koto-ri. Before his orders could be carried out, a Chinese attack severed the convoy about 200 yards to the north of him. Other enemy attacks cut the road south of the stalled convoy, both Chidester and Major James K. Eagan being wounded and captured.

Shallow ditches on either side of the road and the unused narrow-gauge railway were utilized by the isolated troops as protection from the fire of the Chinese occupying the high ground rising abruptly at the right. The valley was about a mile long, covered with a frozen crust of snow; and far from affording much cover, it offered the enemy a convenient approach to the rear by way of the wide plain and frozen river.

The Chinese fire was not heavy at first. But when darkness put an end to Marine air strikes, the enemy became increasingly bolder. Even so, there was no attempt for several hours to close within grenade-throwing distance. During this interlude the defenders had time to recover from their confusion and take defensive positions.

As nearly as the scene can be reconstructed from confused and contradictory accounts, one large and three small perimeters were strung out over a distance of perhaps 1200 yards from north to south. Toward the north, near the outskirts of the village of Pusong-ni, was the largest perimeter. It contained the troops caught north of the second fracture of the column and was led by Major John N. McLaughlin.⁹ His hodge-podge of 130 to 140 men included Captain Charles Peckham and part of his B Company, 31st Infantry; Warrant Officer Lloyd V. Dirst and a group of Marine MPs; some Commandos, Associated Press photographer Frank Noel, and assorted Marine service and headquarters troops.

⁹ Maj McLaughlin was one of the TTU instructors who had transferred to the X Corps Staff. He was an Assistant G-3 and Corps liaison officer with 1stMarDiv.

The three smaller perimeters appear to have resulted from the splintering of a larger group originally containing nearly all the men caught south of the second cut in the convoy. Major Henry J. Seeley, Division motor transport officer, attempted to form a perimeter with these men but was frustrated by Chinese attacks which forced the men to fall back in small groups. About 300 yards south of McLaughlin's perimeter the remnants of two Army platoons crouched in a drainage ditch. Apparently several Marines, including CWO Dee R. Yancey, were with them. Some 30 yards farther down the ditch were Captain Michael J. Capraro, the Division PIO, First Lieutenant John A. Buck, General Craig's aide, and about 15 headquarters troops. A few other Marines clustered around Major Seeley, perhaps a hundred yards south of Capraro's group.¹⁰

There was some hope at first that the tanks of Baker Company, 1st Tank Battalion, would come to the rescue. But the Marine armor ran into heavy opposition near Hills 1236 and 1182 along the road cleared only a few hours before by Task Force Drysdale.

When attacking a convoy, the Chinese usually strove to split the motorized column into segments suitable for tactical mastication. That is what happened to Baker Company. The tanks and trucks nearest to Koto-ri got back without much trouble at 2110 after the enemy cut the column into three groups. The middle group, comprising most of the service trucks, was hit hardest. Lieutenant Colonel Harvey S. Walseth, the Division G-1, was wounded as this group finally fought back to Koto-ri at 0230 after heavy losses in trucks. This left the tank platoon which had proceeded farthest; and it formed a tight perimeter for the night about half a mile south of Seeley's position, boxed in by friendly artillery fires from Koto-ri. At dawn the tanks returned to Koto-ri without further enemy interference.

No knowledge of these events reached the beleaguered troops in Hell Fire Valley. They continued to hope that the tanks might arrive to the aid of men who had no weapons larger than a single 75mm recoilless in addition to rifles, carbines, and grenades. There were also a few 60mm mortars but no ammunition for them.

Fortunately, no determined Chinese attacks were received up to midnight. Looting the trucks proved more alluring than fighting to the

¹⁰ Distances are approximate, since it is understandable that estimates made by participants in the darkness varied a great deal.

Asiatics, and their officers contented themselves with keeping the perimeters pinned down and enveloped on three sides.

Not until the early hours of 30 November did the Communists resort to probing attacks by small groups armed with grenades. The headquarters and service troops gave a good account of themselves in the fire fight. Signalmen, clerks, cooks, truck drivers, military policemen—the Marines of Hell Fire Valley included a good many veterans of World War II, and they proved as steady as the tough combat-trained Commandos. Once again the value of the Marine Corps insistence on good basic training showed itself.

Major McLaughlin sent reconnaissance parties south in an unsuccessful attempt to link up with the other perimeters. He decided, therefore, to remain in his positions and fight off the Chinese until air could come on station at dawn. The wounded were placed in the deepest of the three ditches and Army medics gave first aid.

As the night wore on, McLaughlin's situation became increasingly grave. By 0200 his men were out of grenades. An Army crew performed valiantly with the 75mm recoilless, firing at enemy mortar flashes until all the soldiers were killed or wounded and the gun put out of action. Twice McLaughlin's men drove the Chinese from their mortars only to have them return.

Some of the Commandos managed to slip out of the perimeter in an effort to reach Koto-ri and summon assistance. But an attempt by Noel and two men to run the gantlet in a jeep between 0200 and 0300 ended in their capture before they proceeded a hundred yards.

At about 0430 the Chinese sent their prisoners to the perimeter with a surrender demand. McLaughlin, accompanied by a Commando, went out to parley through an interpreter in the hope of stalling until help arrived, or at least until some of the men escaped.

"Initially I demanded a CCF surrender!" he recalls. "But it made little impression."

The Marine officer stalled until the Chinese threatened to overrun the perimeter with an all-out attack. They gave him ten minutes to discuss the capitulation with his officers. McLaughlin went from one to another of the approximately 40 able bodied men he had left. Some had no rifle ammunition at all and none had more than eight rounds. For the sake of his wounded, he consented to surrender on condition that the serious cases be evacuated. The Chinese agreed and the fight in Hell Fire Valley ended.

McLaughlin succeeded in killing enough time so that more men were given the opportunity to slip away while the enemy relaxed his vigilance during the prolonged negotiations. Largest of these groups was composed of the survivors of the three small perimeters. Capraro and Buck, both of whom were slightly wounded, managed to unite with the Army infantrymen just north of them and nine Commandos, who joined them at about 0200. An hour and a half later they linked up with the Marines under Seeley, who led the combined group in a withdrawal to the high ground across the river. Outdistancing their CCF pursuers, after shooting down several, they made it safely to Koto-ri.

Other groups, including three more Commandos and 71 Army infantrymen, also contrived to straggle back to the 2/1 perimeter.

Although the Chinese did not keep their word as to evacuation of the wounded, they did not interfere with the removal of the more critical cases to a Korean house. When the enemy retired to the hills for the day, an opportunity was found to evacuate these casualties to Koto-ri.¹¹

An accurate breakdown of the Task Force Drysdale casualties will probably never be made, but the following estimate is not far from the mark:

Unit	KIA and MIA	WIA	Total Battle Casualties	Vehicles ¹ Lost
41st Commando.....	18	43	61	-----
Co. G, 3/1.....	8	40	48	-----
Co. B, 1/31.....	100	19	119	22
Div. Hq. Bn.....	25	25	50	18
1st Sig. Bn.....	4	2	6	-----
7th MT Bn.....	2	3	5	4
Serv. Co., 1st Tank Bn.....	5	6	11	30
Co. B(-), 1st Tank Bn.....	0	12	12	-----
Co. D(-), 1st Tank Bn.....	0	8	8	1
Plat, AT Co., RCT-5.....	0	1	1	-----
Total	162	159	321	75

¹ Smith, *Notes*, 867-868.

¹¹ LtCol Chidester and Maj Eagan were still missing at the end of the conflict, when the exchanges of prisoners took place. From the information that LtCol McLaughlin has been able to secure, it appears that both officers died of wounds prior to reaching a prison camp. McLaughlin Comments, 5 Nov 56.

"The casualties of Task Force Drysdale were heavy," commented General Smith, "but by its partial success the Task Force made a significant contribution to the holding of Hagaru which was vital to the Division. To the slender infantry garrison of Hagaru were added a tank company of about 100 men and some 300 seasoned infantrymen. The approximately 300 troops which returned to Koto-ri participated thereafter in the defense of that perimeter."¹²

The head of the Task Force Drysdale column, with the Company D tanks leading George Company and the Commandos, was not aware at dusk on the 29th that the convoy had been cut behind them. There had been previous gaps during the stops and starts caused by enemy fire, and it was supposed at first that the thin-skinned vehicles would catch up with the vanguard.

Progress was fairly good, despite intermittent fire from the high ground on the right of the road, until the tanks reached a point about 2200 yards from Hagaru. There the column was stopped by concentrated CCF mortar and small-arms fire. One of the tanks was so damaged by a satchel charge that it had to be abandoned, and several vehicles were set afire. After Drysdale was wounded the command passed to Sitter, who formed his force into a perimeter until the repulse of the Chinese permitted the march to be resumed.¹³

Several pyramidal tents just outside the Hagaru perimeter were assumed to be occupied by friendly troops until enemy in the vicinity destroyed two George Company trucks and caused several casualties. Later it was learned that the tents had been originally occupied by troops of the 10th Engineer Battalion and abandoned when the Chinese attacked on the 28th.

At 1915, Captain Sitter reported to Lieutenant Colonel Ridge, who directed that George Company and the 41st Commando spend the night in perimeter reserve. After their all-day fight, the men of the column could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the Marine engineers at work on the airstrip under the floodlights.

¹² *Ibid.* A postscript to the Hell Fire Valley fight was written the following spring in front-page headlines announcing the escape from a CCF prison camp of 17 enlisted Marines and a soldier. Among them were five NCOs who contributed firsthand accounts for these pages. Of the 44 Marines listed as MIA, a total of 25 either escaped or survived their prison camp experiences and were liberated in Operation Big Switch.

¹³ This section, except where otherwise specified, has been derived from the following sources: 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 4-5, 8-9; 1stTkBn SAR, 24-25; Ridge, *Notes*; Sitter ltr, 4 Oct 55; Simmons interv, 22 Mar 56; Jochums ltr, 16 Dec 55; Canzona narrative, 27 Mar 56; Carey narrative, 3 Feb 56.

Contrary to expectations, the hours of darkness on 29–30 November passed in comparative quiet at Hagaru except for CCF harassing fires. It was not a coincidence that the enemy kept his distance. Attacks on the East Hill and Item and How Company positions of 3/1 actually had been planned and partly executed by troops of the 58th CCF Division, according to POW testimony. They were broken up by Marine air attacks and supporting fires which hit the assembly areas.

The effectiveness of these fires owed a good deal to the intelligence brought back to Lieutenant Carey, the Battalion S-2, by CIC agents who circulated among Chinese troops on 27 and 28 November. The Battalion S-2 had a work table at the CP beside Major Simmons, the SAC, who directed six sorties of the night hecklers of VMF(N)-542. He guided the planes through the darkness to their targets with a fiery arrow as converging machine-gun tracer bullets crossed over suspected CCF assembly areas.

The 81mm mortars of Weapons Company, 3/1, fired about 1100 rounds during the night, and the corresponding unit of 2/7 made a noteworthy contribution. The following day, according to Carey, Chinese prisoners reported that "most of the units employed around Hagaru were very badly hit."¹⁴

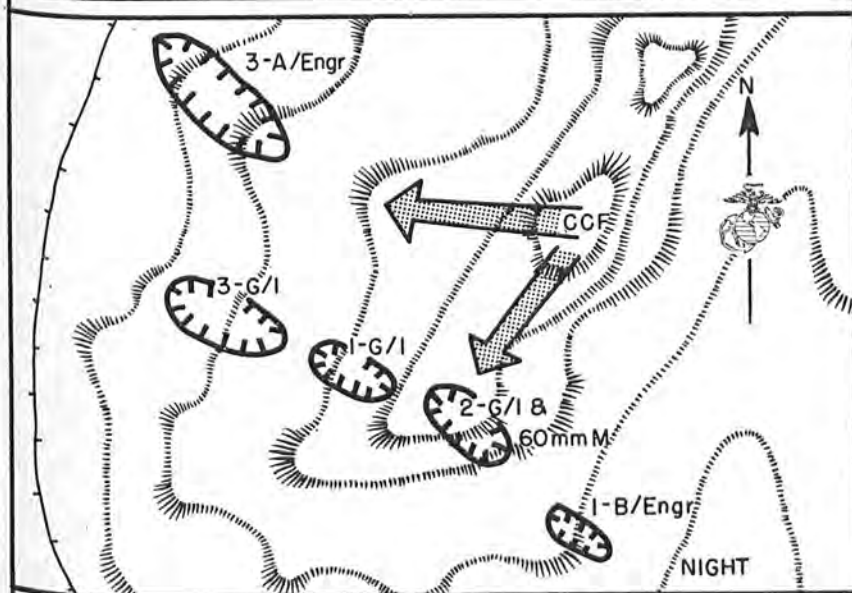
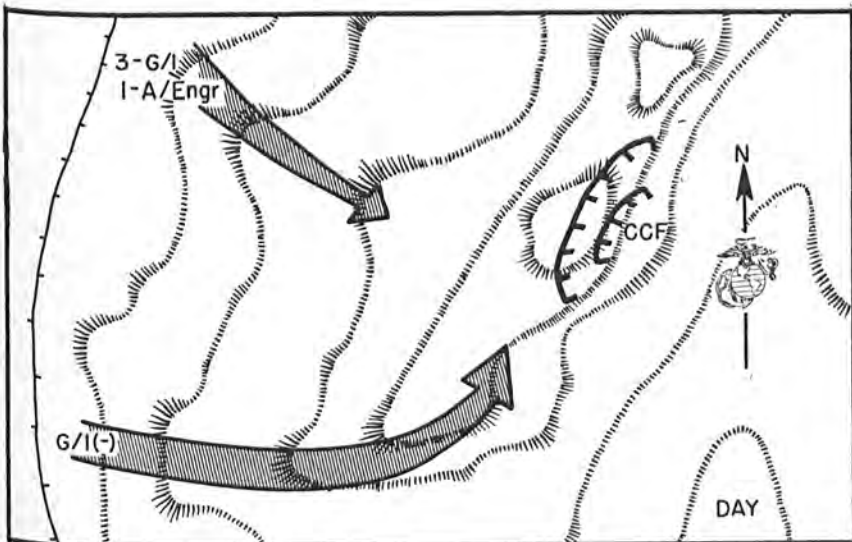
A few white phosphorus mortar rounds fell in the lines of How and Item Companies, and a CCF green flare caused an alert for an attack which never materialized. In the early morning hours of the 30th an enemy concentration appeared to be taking place on the Item Company front, but intensive 60mm mortar fire put an end to the threat.

Attack of George Company on East Hill

At 0800, the battalion commander ordered George Company to retake East Hill while the Commandos remained in reserve. Sitter's plan called for his 1st and 2d platoons, commanded by Second Lieutenants Frederick W. Hopkins and John W. Jaeger respectively, to pass through Myers' group, then make a sharp left turn and attack on either side of the ridge. First Lieutenant Carl E. Dennis' 3d Platoon and two platoons of Able Company engineers were to follow in reserve.

Slow progress caused the George Company commander to modify the

¹⁴ This account of Marine supporting fires on the night of 29–30 November is based on: Carey narrative, 3 Feb 56; LtCol E. H. Simmons interv, 22 Mar 56; 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 4-5.



EAST HILL ATTACKS

30 November

MAP-22

plan by giving his 3d platoon and the two engineer platoons the mission of enveloping the CCF right flank (see Map 22). Lieutenant Dennis led the attack, with First Lieutenant Ernest P. Skelt's and Lieutenant Canzona's engineer platoons following.

Neither of the George Company attacks was successful. The tramping of hundreds of feet over the snow had made the footing more treacherous than ever; and once again the combination of difficult terrain and long-range Chinese fire accounted for failure to retake East Hill. Sitter's request to set up defense positions on the ground previously occupied by Myers was granted. Meanwhile Dennis' platoon and the engineers were directed to withdraw to the foot of the hill, so that the Corsairs could work the CCF positions over with rockets and bombs.

High Level Command Conference

Although the Marines at Hagaru had little to do with the higher levels of strategy, it was evident that the continued retreat of the Eighth Army in west Korea must ultimately affect the destinies of X Corps. Of more immediate concern was the deteriorating situation of the three battalions (two infantry and one artillery) of the 7th Infantry Division east of the Chosin Reservoir. Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, assistant division commander, informed General Smith at noon on the 29th that the Army troops had suffered approximately 400 casualties while falling back toward Hagaru and were unable to fight their way out to safety. At 2027 that night, all troops in the Chosin Reservoir area, including the three Army battalions, were placed under the operational control of the Marine commander by X Corps. The 1st Marine Division was directed to "redeploy one RCT without delay from Yudam-ni area to Hagaru area, gain contact with elements of the 7th Inf Div E of Chosin Reservoir; co-ordinate all forces in and N of Hagaru in a perimeter defense based on Hagaru; open and secure Hagaru-Koto-ri MSR."¹⁵

On the afternoon of the 30th a command conference was held at Hagaru in the Division CP. Generals Almond, Smith, Barr, and Hodes were informed at the briefing session that a disaster threatened the three Army battalions.¹⁶

¹⁵ X Corps *OI* 19, 29 Nov 50.

¹⁶ Smith, *Chronicle*, 95; X Corps *WD Sum*, Nov 50, 16-17; CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *WD*, 30 Nov 50.

Almond was also much concerned about the attacks on the Marine MSR. He had been given a firsthand account that morning by the senior Marine officer on the X Corps staff, Colonel Edward H. Forney, who had just returned from Koto-ri.¹⁷

At the Hagaru conference the X Corps commander announced that he had abandoned any idea of consolidating positions in the Chosin Reservoir area. Stressing the necessity for speed in falling back toward Hamhung, he promised Smith resupply by air after authorizing him to burn or destroy all equipment which would delay his withdrawal to the seacoast.

The Marine general replied that his movements must be governed by his ability to evacuate his wounded. He would have to fight his way out, he added, and could not afford to discard equipment; it was his intention, therefore, to bring out the bulk of it.¹⁸

Almond directed Smith and Barr to draw up a plan and time schedule for extricating the Army battalions east of the Reservoir. Those two generals agreed, however, that not much could be done until the Yudamni Marines arrived at Hagaru, and the conference ended on an inconclusive note. That same afternoon X Corps OpnO 8-50 was received. It defined the Corps mission as "maintaining contact with the enemy to the maximum capability consistent with cohesive action, oriented to the Hamhung-Hungnam base of operation."¹⁹

The decision to concentrate X Corps forces in that area meant the evacuation of Wonsan. General Harris lost no time in directing MAG-12 to move from Wonsan Airfield to Yonpo. Hedron-12 and the three combat squadrons began shifting personnel and equipment at once. Transfer of the aircraft was completed on 1 December. In many instances the planes took off on combat missions from Wonsan and landed at Yonpo, so that the ground forces were not deprived of air support.²⁰

High level naval commanders were already preparing for an evacuation of northeast Korea if matters came to the worst. Admiral Joy foresaw as early as the 28th that if the retreat of the battered Eighth

¹⁷ Col E. H. Forney, *Transcript of Special Report, Deputy Chief of Staff, X Corps, 19 August, 21 December 1950*, 3.

¹⁸ Smith, *Chronicle*, 95. These decisions were confirmed by CG X Corps msg X 13522, 1 Dec 50.

¹⁹ X Corps OpnO 8, 30 Nov 50. See also X Corps *WD Sum, Nov 50*, 16-17; and CG's Diary Extracts in X Corps *WD* 30 Nov 50.

²⁰ MAG-12 *HD Nov 50*, 8; 1stMAW *HD Dec 50*; CO MAG-12 msg to Movement Report Office (MRO) Tokyo, 0805 2 Dec 50 in *ibid.* VMF-312 *HD, Dec 50*.

Army continued, X Corps would have to choose between falling back and being outflanked. In view of the time needed to collect the enormous quantities of shipping required, he warned Admiral Doyle on that date that a large-scale redeployment operation might be necessary. Doyle in turn directed his staff to commence planning for redeployment either by an administrative outloading or by a fighting withdrawal.²¹

CCF Attacks of 1 December at Hagaru

During the early hours of darkness on 30 November, it appeared that Hagaru might have a second quiet night. Three bugle calls were heard by Item Company at 2015, and the enemy sent up a green flare an hour later. But no unusual CCF activity was reported until 2330, when small patrols began probing for weak spots in the Item Company lines.

The enemy could scarcely have chosen a less rewarding area for such research. As usual, Lieutenant Fisher had built up an elaborate system of concertinas, trip flares, and booby traps; and his sandbagged foxholes and weapon emplacements afforded his men maximum protection. At midnight, when the enemy came on in strength, each successive assault wave shattered against the terrific fire power which a Marine rifle company, aided by artillery, tanks, 81mm mortars, and heavy machine guns, could concentrate.

Several times the enemy's momentum carried him to the Item Company foxholes but no Communists lived to exploit their advantage. On one of these occasions Sergeant Charles V. Davidson, having expended his ammunition, proved that cold steel still has its uses by bayoneting the last of his attackers.²²

Again, as on the night of the 28th, the enemy had chosen to launch his major attack against Marine strength, though his daytime observation must have disclosed the preparations for a hot reception in the Item Company sector. An estimated 500 to 750 Chinese were killed on this front at a cost to Fisher's men of two KIA and 10 WIA.²³

The Chinese also repeated themselves by carrying out another attack on East Hill which ended in a second costly stalemate. The western slope up to the military crest was held by the following units from right to left: First Lieutenant Ermine L. Meeker's 1st Platoon of Baker

²¹ ComPhibGruOne, *Action Report for Hungnam Redeployment, December 1950*. 1.

²² Miller ltr, 10 Oct 55.

²³ 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 5; Ridge, *Notes*.

Company engineers; the 2d, 1st, and 3d Platoons of George Company; and Lieutenant Skelt's 3d Platoon of Able Company Engineers. To the left of Skelt, near the foot of the hill, were Lieutenant Canzona's 1st Platoon of Able engineers; two tanks of the AT Company, 2/7; and elements of Lieutenant Colonel Banks' 1st Service Battalion.²⁴

The action began shortly before midnight with one of those comedy situations which develop on the grimmest occasions. The sign or password was "Abraham" and the countersign "Lincoln," but two Company A engineers on a listening post did not pause for the customary exchange. Having been jumped by what their startled eyes took to be a Chinese regiment, they sprinted downhill yelling, "Abraham Lincoln! Abraham Lincoln!" as they slid into Skelt's lines with the enemy close behind.

His engineers had no leisure for a laugh. Within a few seconds they were mixing it in a wild melee with Communists who seemed literally to drop on them from above. Meanwhile, George Company was hard hit by well aimed mortar fire which threatened to wipe out Lieutenant Hopkins' 1st Platoon. The ensuing double-headed CCF attack bent back the left flank of George Company, with both the 1st and 3d Platoons giving ground.

On the left Skelt's platoon was pushed down to the foot of the hill by superior enemy numbers after exactly half of his 28 men were killed or wounded. Here the fight continued with Banks' service troops lending a hand until the Chinese were exterminated.

This penetration was a hollow triumph for the enemy. No friendly forces being left in the center, the How Battery howitzers walked shells up and down the western slope. Mortars and machine guns chimed in, and Lieutenant Canzona's platoon was in position to direct the fire of the two tanks of AT Company 2/7.

The scene became bright as day after an enemy artillery shell set 50 drums of gasoline ablaze in a Supply Area dump. Like an enormous torch, the flames illuminated the battle so vividly that General Smith looked on from the doorway of his CP, some 1200 yards away. Several bullets pierced the roof and walls during the night.

Again, as in the fight of 28-29 November, Marine fire power blocked the gap on the central and northwest slopes of East Hill. Marine and

²⁴ Sources for the balance of this section are as follows: Smith, *Chronicle*, 97-100; 3/1 SAR 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 5-6; Ridge, *Notes*; Sitter ltr, 4 Oct 55; Canzona narrative, 8 Mar 56; Pendas ltr, 18 Dec 55; Carey ltr, 14 Feb 56; Capt E. L. Meeker interv, 10 Apr 56.

Army service troops took a part in the fighting which is the more creditable considering that they were ordered out in the middle of the night, placed in a provisional unit with strange troops, and marched off into the darkness to attack or defend at some critical point.

Lieutenant Meeker's engineer platoon, on the right of George Company, had a long-drawn fire fight but got off with losses of one man killed and three wounded. At 0100 the CCF pressure on Sitter's troops was so heavy that Lieutenant Carey, former commander of the 1st Platoon, was taken from his S-2 duties to lead a group of reinforcements which he described as "all available hands from the CP or any other units in Hagaru who could spare personnel." Carrying as much ammunition as possible, he arrived at the George Company CP to find Sitter still commanding in spite of his wound. Scarcely a full squad was left of Carey's old outfit when he helped to restore the lines.

It was necessary for Ridge to send a further reinforcement consisting of British Marines of the 41st Commando before George Company's left flank was secured. A counterattack at daybreak regained lost ground, and the situation was well under control when air came on station at 0900.

Thus ended another night of confusion and frustration for both sides on East Hill. While the Chinese attack had been better organized and in larger force than the effort of the 29th, it was too little and too late for decisive results in spite of heavy losses. On the other hand, George Company and its reinforcing elements had suffered an estimated 60 men killed and wounded.

Although the Marines of Hagaru could not have suspected it on the morning of 1 December, the enemy had, for the time being, shot his bolt. His first two large-scale attacks, as POW interrogations were to confirm, had used up not only the personnel of a division but most of the limited supplies of ammunition available. Thus it is probable that the following estimates of CCF casualties, as published in the 3/1 report, for the period of 28 November to 5 December, were nearer to accuracy than most such summaries:

- (1) 58th CCF Division: Estimated casualties of 3300 for the 172d Regiment; 1750 each for the 173d and 174th Regiments.
- (2) 59th CCF Division: Estimated 1750 casualties for the 176th Regiment. No other units identified.

The known Chinese dead in the two night battles amounted to at least 1500; and if it may be assumed that three or four times that number were wounded, the total casualties would have crippled an

enemy infantry division of 7500 to 10,000 men, plus an additional regiment. Considering the primitive state of CCF supply and medical service, moreover, it is likely that hundreds died of wounds and privations behind their own lines.

The losses of 3/1 at Hagaru were given as 33 KIA, 10 DOW, 2 MIA, and 270 WIA—a total of 315 battle casualties, nearly all of which were incurred from 28 November to 1 December.²⁵ There are no over-all casualty figures for Marine or Army service troops, but it is probable that their total losses exceeded those of 3/1.

Rescue of U. S. Army Wounded

Casualties estimated as high as 75 per cent were suffered by the three U. S. Army battalions east of the Reservoir. At 2200 on the night of 1 December, the first survivors, most of them walking wounded, reached the Marine lines north of Hagaru with tales of frightful losses suffered in the five days of continual fighting since the first CCF attack on the night of 27–28 November.

Following this action Colonel Allan D. MacLean, commanding the 31st Infantry, had set up a perimeter near Sinhung-ni with the 3d Battalion of his regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 57th Field Artillery. Along the shore farther to the north, Lieutenant Colonel Don C. Faith, USA, held a separate perimeter with the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry (see Map 20).²⁶

Both positions were hard hit by the Chinese on the night of 27–28 November and isolated from each other. During the next 24 hours they beat off CCF attacks with the support of Marine and FEAF planes, and Faith fought his way through to a junction with the Sinhung-ni force.

When the senior officer was killed, Faith took command of all three battalions. Immobilized by nearly 500 casualties, he remained in the Sinhung-ni perimeter, where he was supplied by air. On the 29th General Hodes sent a relief force in company strength from 31st Infantry units in the area just north of Hagaru. These troops, supported by

²⁵ Ridge, *Notes*; Smith, *Notes*, 854.

²⁶ The sources for the operations of Task Force Faith, unless otherwise noted, are: Statement of Capt Edward P. Stamford, n. d., 2–15; Statement of Dr. Lee Tong Kak, n. d.; Capt Martin Blumenson, USA, "Chosin Reservoir," in Capt Russell A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*, 63–86; X Corps *WD Sum*, Nov 50, 33–34. Chinese accounts of these actions may be found in *ATIS Enemy Documents: Korean Campaign*, Issue 84, 7–15 and 20–25. LtCol Faith had distinguished himself in World War II as aide to MajGen Matthew B. Ridgway, then commanding the 82d Airborne Div.

several Army tanks, were hurled back by superior CCF numbers with the loss of two tanks and heavy personnel casualties.

On 1 December, fearing that he would be overwhelmed in his Sinhung-ni perimeter, Faith attempted to break through to Hagaru. After destroying the howitzers and all but the most essential equipment, the convoy with its hundreds of wounded moved out under the constant cover of Marine close air support, controlled by Captain Edward P. Stamford, USMC.²⁷

Progress was slow and exhausting, with frequent stops for fire fights. There were many instances of individual bravery in the face of adversity, but losses of officers and NCOs gradually deprived the units of leadership. As an added handicap, a large proportion of the troops were ROKs who understood no English.

The task force came near to a breakout. At dusk it was only four and a half miles from Hagaru when Faith fell mortally wounded and the units shattered into leaderless groups.²⁸ Soon the column had ceased to exist as a military force. A tragic disintegration set in as wounded and frostbitten men made their way over the ice of the Reservoir in wretched little bands drawn together by a common misery rather than discipline.

By a miracle the first stragglers to reach Hagaru got through the mine fields and trip flares without harm. Before dawn a total of about 670 survivors of Task Force Faith had been taken into the warming tents of Hagaru.

Lieutenant Colonel Beall, commanding officer of the 1st Motor Transport Battalion, made a personal search in the morning for other survivors. Finding more than his jeep could carry, he organized a task force of trucks, jeeps, and sleds. The only CCF opposition to the Marines came in the form of long-distance sniping which grew so troublesome late in the afternoon that the truckers set up a machine gun section on the ice for protection. Far from hindering the escape of the Army wounded, the Chinese actually assisted in some instances, thus adding to the difficulty of understanding the Oriental mentality.²⁹

²⁷ VMF(N)-542 SAR, sec C, 1-2; VMF(N)-542 HD, Dec 50, 1-2; 1stMAW SAR, annex J, (hereafter MAG-33 SAR), sec B, 5, 8-9. See also descriptions of air support in 1stLt H. S. Wilson interv by Capt J. I. Kiernan, Jr., 29 Jan 51; 1stLt K. E. Kiester interv by Capt Kiernan, 25 Jan 51; Capt C. P. Blankenship interv by Capt Kiernan, 26 Jan 51; and 1stLt W. R. Lipscomb interv by Capt Kiernan, 18 Feb 51.

²⁸ The courageous Army officer was awarded posthumously a Congressional Medal of Honor.

²⁹ The account of the rescue of survivors from Task Force Faith is based upon: 1stMar Div SAR, annex Q (hereafter DivSurgeon SAR), n. p. and appendix II, 10; Statement of LtCol O. L. Beall, n. d.; 1stMarDiv POR 197; Smith, *Notes*, 902-906; and Smith, *Chronicle*, 98, 100.



USMC Photo A 5679

This Was Hagaru—Two views of the Marine forward base at the foot of the Chosin Reservoir, with East Hill in the background; here the troops reorganized for the final breakout.

USMC Photo A 4971





USMC Photo A 543

Patrol Actions—Task forces, ranging in size from a squad to a battalion, sometimes supported by tanks as well as air and artillery, were employed for specific missions during the breakout.

USMC Photo A 5445





USMC Photo A 5438

Before and After Taking—Two views, only a few seconds apart, of the effective close air support given Marine infantry; the plane is hidden by the dense cloud of black smoke.

USMC Photo A 5440





USMC Photo A 5685

The Hagaru Airstrip—Above, walking wounded awaiting evacuation in an Air Force C-47 which flew in artillery ammunition; below, casualties leave their rifles behind but will take out much-needed parachutes shown in the foreground.

USMC Photo A 5683





USMC Photo A 5398

Helicopter and Ambulance Evacuation—Above, the helicopters of VMO-6 flew out casualties from areas which otherwise could not have been reached; below, ambulances had their moments, too, as this bullet-riddled specimen shows.

JSMC Photo A 5461





USMC Photo A 5428

Breakout from Hagaru—Above, crippled vehicles are simply pushed off the road; below, at every halt the weary gravel-crunchers sink exhausted into the snow.

USMC Photo A 5428





Photos courtesy LtGen E. A. Craig and Capt R. W. Crook

Victims of Communist Aggression—Three views of the Korean refugees, ranging from infants to patriarchs, who followed the Marine column all the way to Hungnam.

USA Photo SC 355017





USMC Photo A 130441

Magnificent Air Support—Above, crewmen check rockets of a Corsair fighter-bomber; and, below, one of the old Grumman TBMs resurrected for casualty evacuation from Koto-ri.

USMC Photo A 130442





USMC Photo A 5361

Fighting in the Heavyweight Division—Above, Marine tanks awaiting withdrawal from Koto-ri; below, Army self-propelled 155mm howitzers firing from the Chihung-ni area.

USA Photo SC 354246





USMC Photo A 5372

Through the Swirling Flakes—The march southward from Koto-ri begins in a snowstorm as a Marine infantry battalion attacks northward from Chihung-ni to open up the MSR.

USMC Photo A 5370





USMC Photo A 5382

The Endless Column of March—Two more views of the column, the first elements of which reached Chinhung-ni before the last troops departed Koto-ri, ten miles to the rear.

USMC Photo A 5356





USMC Photo A 5466



USMC Photo A 5444

Clearing the Flanks—Tanks and infantry work together to clear the flanks of enemy combat groups which watched for every opportunity to attack from the high ground.

USMC Photo A 5369





USMC Photo A 5376

A Job for the Engineers—Above, this gap had to be spanned if the vehicles were to be brought out from Koto-ri; below, infantry crossing over air-dropped Treadway bridge.

USMC Photo A 5408





USN Photo 424506

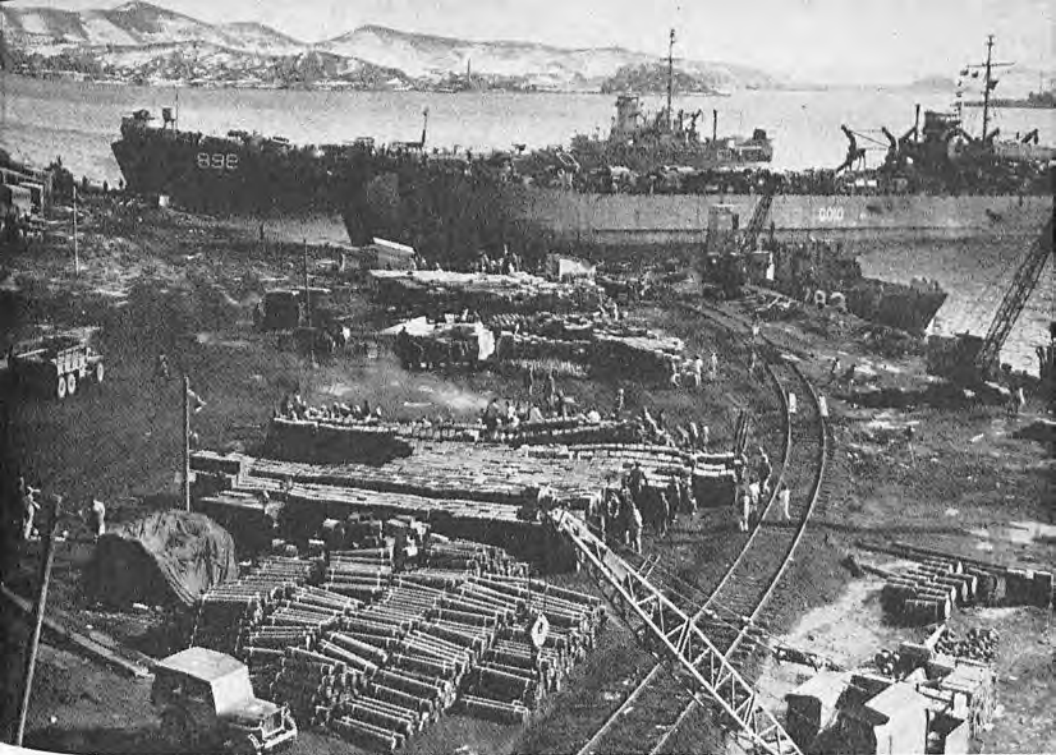


USN Photo 424527

The Hungnam Redeployment—Above, two views of Marines who were first X Corps troops to embark; below, a glimpse of the thousands of tons of equipment to be loaded.

USA Photo SC 355021

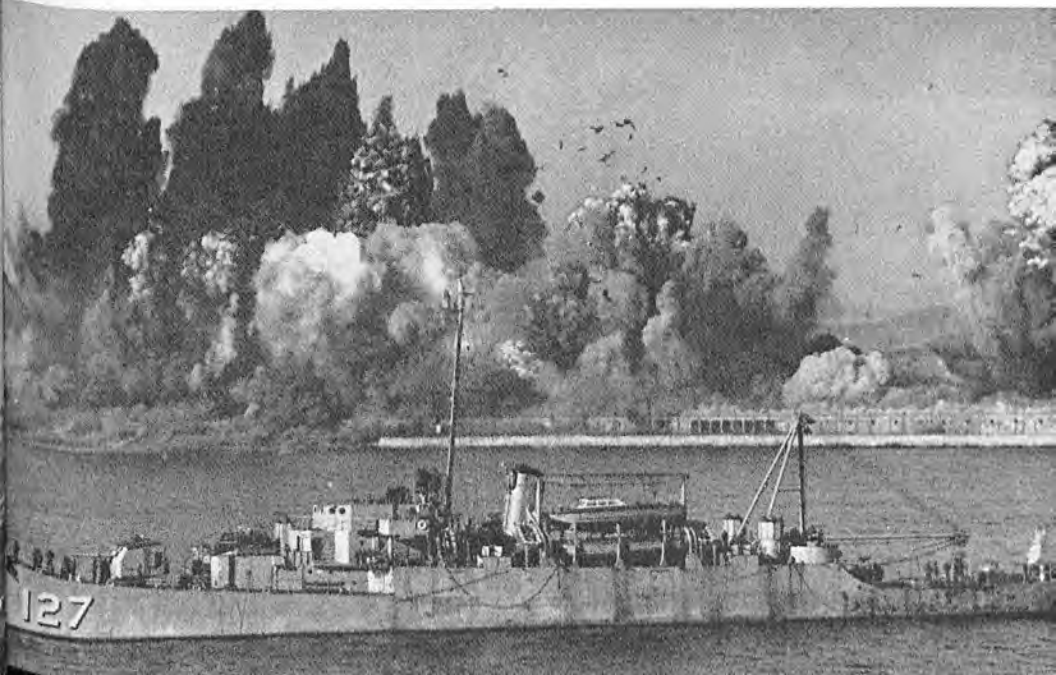




USN Photo 423914

Waterfront Panoramas—Above, these two LSTs were among the last to be loaded; below, the final demolitions scene, with the USS Begor (APD 127) shown in the foreground.

USN Photo 424297





USN Photo 424567

The Honored Dead—On the day of his departure from Hungnam the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division visits the cemetery for a last silent tribute to the dead.

Of the 319 soldiers rescued by Beall on 2 December, nearly all were wounded or frostbitten. Some were found wandering about in aimless circles on the ice, in a state of shock.

A company-size task force of Army troops from Hagaru, supported by tanks, moved out that day to bring in any organized units of the three shattered battalions which might have been left behind. Known as Task Force Anderson after Lieutenant Colonel Berry K. Anderson, senior Army officer at Hagaru, the column met heavy CCF opposition and was recalled when it became evident that only stragglers remained.³⁰

Beall and his men kept up their rescue work until the last of an estimated 1050 survivors of the original 2500 troops had been saved. A Marine reconnaissance patrol counted more than 300 dead in the abandoned trucks of the Task Force Faith convoy, and there were apparently hundreds of MIA. The 385 able-bodied soldiers who reached Hagaru were organized into a provisional battalion and provided with Marine equipment.³¹

First Landings on Hagaru Airstrip

Casualty evacuation had become such a problem by 1 December that Captain Eugene R. Hering, (MC) USN, the Division surgeon, called at General Smith's CP that morning. He reported that some 600 casualties at Hagaru were putting a severe strain on the limited facilities of C and E Companies of the 1st Medical Battalion. It was further estimated that 500 casualties would be brought in by the Yudam-ni units and 400 from the three Army battalions east of the Reservoir.³²

Although both figures were to prove far too low, they seemed alarmingly high at a time when only the most critical casualties could be evacuated by helicopter or OY. Flying in extreme cold and landing at high altitudes where the aircraft has less than normal lift, the pilots of Major Gottschalk's VMO-6 saved scores of lives. From 27 November to 1 December, when the transports took over, 152 casualties were

³⁰ 1stMarDiv G-3 Journal 1-2 Dec 50, entry 18; G-3 1stMarDiv tel to S-3 11-12 Mar, 1150 2 Dec 50.

³¹ *Ibid.* Estimates of the number of soldiers evacuated by air from Hagaru as casualties run as high as 1500, but no accurate records were kept. Any such total, moreover, would have to include men from the Army units stationed at Hagaru as well as survivors of the Task Force Faith disaster.

³² DivSurgeon SAR, n. p.; Smith, *Notes*, 990-994, and *Chronicle*, 1 Dec 50; Capt E. R. Hering, "Address Before U. S. Association of Military Surgeons," 9 Oct 51; and "Address Before American Medical Association Convention," 14 Jun 51.

evacuated by the OYs and helicopters—109 from Yudam-ni, 36 from Hagaru, and seven from Koto-ri.³³

Altogether, 220 evacuation flights and 11 rescue missions were completed during the entire Reservoir campaign by a squadron which on 1 November included 25 officers, 95 enlisted men, eight OY-2 and two L5G observation planes and nine HO3S-1 Sikorsky helicopters. First Lieutenant Robert A. Longstaff was killed by enemy small-arms fire near Toktong Pass while on an evacuation flight, and both Captain Farish and Lieutenant Englehardt had their helicopters so badly riddled by CCF bullets that the machines were laid up for repairs.³⁴

Two surgical teams from Hungnam had been flown to Hagaru by helicopter, but the evacuation problem remained so urgent on 1 December that the command of the 1st Marine Division authorized a trial landing on the new airstrip. Only 40 per cent completed at this time, the runway was 2900 feet long and 50 feet wide, with a 2 per cent grade to the north.

It was a tense moment, at 1430 that afternoon, when the knots of parka-clad Marine spectators watched the wheels of the first FEAF C-47 hit the frozen, snow-covered strip. The big two-motored aircraft bounced and lurched its way over the rough surface, but the landing was a success. An even more nerve-racking test ensued half an hour later when the pilot took off with 24 casualties. It seemed for a breath-snatching instant that the run wouldn't be long enough for the machine to become airborne, but at last the tail lifted and the wings got enough "bite" to clear the hills to the south.

Three more planes landed that afternoon, taking off with about 60 more casualties. The last arrival, heavily loaded with ammunition, collapsed its landing gear on the bumpy strip and had to be destroyed and abandoned.³⁵

At the other end of the evacuation chain, clearing stations had been established by X Corps at Yonpo Airfield to receive and distribute casualties. A 30-day evacuation policy was maintained, and the casualties to remain in the area went to the 1st Marine Division Hospital in Hungnam, the Army 121st Evacuation Hospital in Hamhung, and the USS *Consolation* in Hungnam harbor. Casualties requiring more than 30

³³ VMO-6 SAR, 14-15; Smith, *Notes*, 844.

³⁴ *Ibid.* See also Lynn Montross, *Cavalry of the Sky* (New York, 1954), 134-136.

³⁵ Div Surgeon SAR, n. p.; Smith, *Notes*, 990-991, and *Chronicle*, 98-99.

days of hospitalization were flown from Yonpo to Japan, though a few critical cases were evacuated directly from Hagaru to Japan.³⁶

It was planned for incoming transports at Hagaru to fly both supplies and troop replacements. Meanwhile, on 1 December, the 1st Marine Division had its first C-119 air drop from Japan. Known as "Baldwins," these drops consisted of a prearranged quantity of small arms ammunition, weapons, water, rations, and medical supplies, though the amounts could be modified as desired.³⁷

Air drops, however, did not have the capability of supplying an RCT in combat, let alone a division. At this time the Combat Cargo Command, FEAF, estimated its delivery capabilities at only 70 tons per day; and even though in practice this total was stepped up to 100, it fell five short of the requirements of an RCT. Fortunately, the foresight of the Division commander and staff had enabled the Supply Regulating Detachment to build up a level of six days' rations and two units of fire at Hagaru.³⁸ This backlog, plus such quantities as could be delivered by Baldwin drops, promised to see the Division through the emergency.

Infantrymen are seldom given to self-effacement, but at nightfall on 1 December only an ungrateful gravel-cruncher could have failed to pay a silent tribute to the other services as well as to the supporting arms of the Marine Corps. Navy medics, FEAF airmen, Army service units—they had all helped to make it possible for the Marines to plan a breakout. Yet it is likely that the 1st Engineer Battalion came first in the affections of wounded men being loaded in the C-47s for evacuation.

In just twelve days and nights the engineers of Company D had hacked this airstrip out of the frozen earth. Marine infantrymen could never forget the two critical nights of battle when they looked back over their shoulders from combat areas at the heartening spectacle of the dozers puffing and huffing under the floodlights. In a pinch Lieutenant Colonel Partridge's specialists had doubled as riflemen, too, and several platoons were riddled with casualties. Thanks in large part to the engineers, the Hagaru base was no longer isolated on 1 December. And though the enemy did not yet realize it, he had lost the initiative on this eventful Friday. The Marines at Yudam-ni were coming out, and they were coming out fighting with their casualties and equipment.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Smith, *Notes*, 1001-1004. Col J. H. Brower Comments, n. d.

³⁸ Smith, *Notes*, 1001-1004.

CHAPTER XII

Breakout From Yudam-ni

Joint Planning for Breakout—The Fight for Hills 1419 and 1542—March of 1/7 Over the Mountains—Attack of 3/5 on 1–2 December—The Ridgerunners of Toktong Pass—CCF Attacks on Hills 1276 and 1542—Advance of Darkhorse on 2–3 December—Entry into Hagaru Perimeter

THE FIRST STEPS toward regaining the initiative were taken by the Marine command as early as 29 November. Upon being informed that the composite battalion had failed to open up the MSR south of Yudam-ni, General Smith concluded that it was a task for a regiment. At 1545 that afternoon he issued the following orders to RCTs 5 and 7:

RCT-5 assume responsibility protection Yudam-ni area adjusting present dispositions accordingly. RCT-7 conduct operations clear MSR to Hagaru without delay employing entire regiment.¹

That same evening the Division CP received X Corps OI 19, providing that an RCT be redeployed from the Yudam-ni area to Hagaru.² No further directives from Division were necessary to implement this instruction, since it had been anticipated in General Smith's orders.

Upon receipt, the two Yudam-ni regimental commanders began joint planning for measures to be taken. The unusual command situation at Yudam-ni, in the absence of the assistant division commander, was explained by Colonel Litzenberg:

The 5th and 7th Marines were each acting under separate orders from the Division. The Division would issue orders to one regiment with information to the other, so that Division retained the control; and, of course, the 4th

¹ CG 1stMarDiv msg to COs 5th and 7thMars, 1750 29 Nov 50.

² XCorps OI 19, 29 Nov 50.

Battalion, 11th Marines, in general support of both regiments, was not actually under the control of either of us. Lieutenant Colonel Murray . . . operated in very close coordination with me, sometimes at his own command post and sometimes at mine. We called in [Major] McReynolds, the commander of 4/11, discussed the situation with him, and thereafter Lieutenant Colonel Murray and I issued orders jointly as necessary. . . . This command arrangement functioned very well. There was never any particular disagreement.³

For purposes of planning the supporting fires for the breakout, an artillery groupment was formed and Lieutenant Colonel Feehan given the responsibility of coordination. It was further agreed that no air drops of 155mm ammunition would be requested because of the greater number of 105mm rounds which could be received with fewer difficulties.⁴

The problems of the two RCTs, commented General Smith, could not be separated. "The only feasible thing for them to do was pool their resources. . . . The assignment of command to the senior regimental commander was considered but rejected in favor of cooperation."⁵

At 0600 on the 30th, the two RCTs issued their Joint OpnO 1-50, which called for the regroupment of the Yudam-ni forces in a new position south of the village and astride the MSR as a first step toward a breakout.⁶ Thus in effect the two RCTs and supporting troops would be exchanging an east-and-west perimeter for one pointing from north to south along the road to Hagaru. Not only was the terrain south of the village more defensible, but a smaller perimeter would serve the purpose.

Lieutenant Colonel Winecoff, Assistant G-3 of the Division, flew to Yudam-ni on the 30th to observe and report on the situation. He was given a copy of Joint OpnO 1-50 for delivery to General Smith on his return to Hagaru.⁷

That same afternoon, during a conference with General Almond at

³ Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 57. Maj McReynolds had already placed his battalion under Col Litzenberg as senior officer present. LtCol W. McReynolds Comments, 15 Aug 56.

⁴ LtCol H. A. Feehan Comments, 1 Aug 56. McReynolds Comments, 15 Aug 56.

⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 918-919.

⁶ The remainder of this section, unless otherwise noted, is derived from: RCT 5 and RCT 7 *Joint OpnO 1-50*, 30 Nov 50; X Corps *OpnO 8*, 30 Nov 50; 7thMar *SAR*, 22-23; 3/7 *SAR*, n. p.; 2/5 *SAR*, 20-21; Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 55; Gen O. P. Smith Comments, 13 Nov 56; Col J. L. Winecoff Comments, n. d.; LtCol R. D. Taplett Comments, 9 Aug 56.

⁷ A copy had been sent out earlier with the pilot of an evacuation helicopter but it did not reach the Division CP until 1 December. Winecoff Comments.

Hagaru, the Marine commander received X Corps OpnO 8, directing him to operate against the enemy in zone, withdrawing elements north and northwest of Hagaru to that area while securing the Sudong-Hagaru MSR. And at 1920 that evening, Division issued the following dispatch orders to RCTs 5 and 7:

Expedite execution of Joint OpnO 1-50 and combined movement RCT-5 and RCT-7 to Hagaru prepared for further withdrawal south. Destroy any supplies and equipment which must be abandoned during this withdrawal.⁸

As a prerequisite, a good deal of reorganization had to be effected at Yudam-ni. In order to provide a force to hold the shoulders of the high ground through which RCT-7 would advance, it was decided to put together another composite battalion.

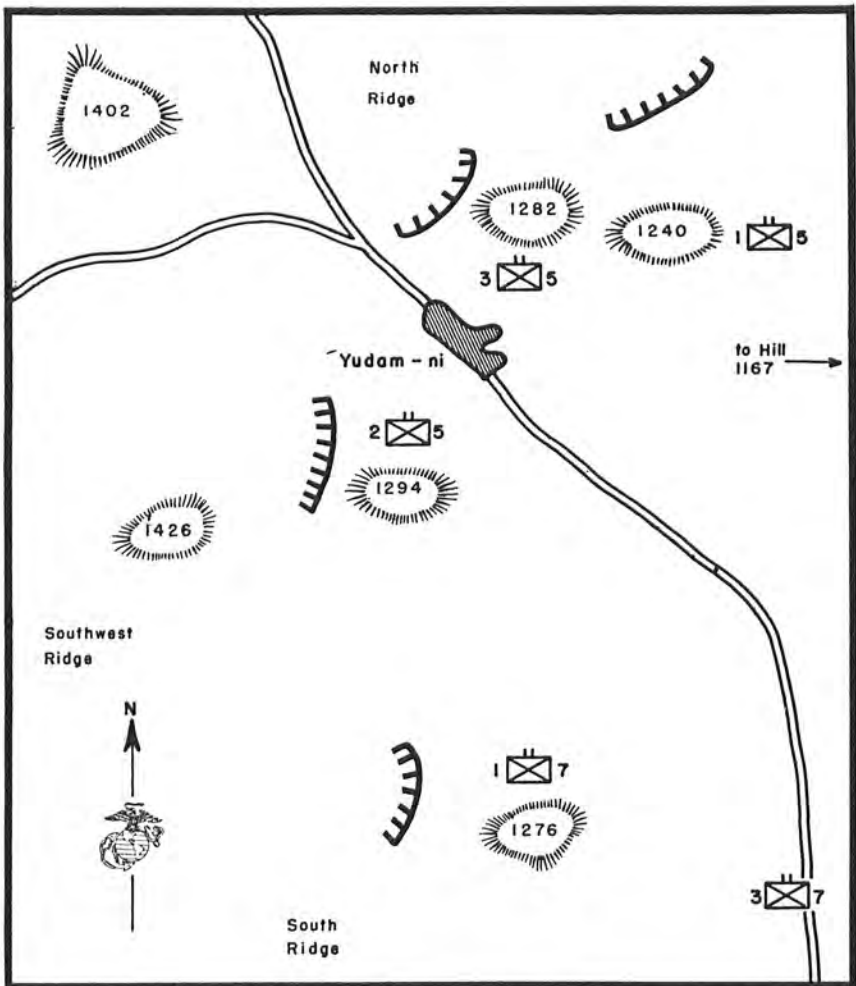
The new unit consisted of George Company, 3/7, Able Company, 1/5, and the remnants of Dog and Easy Companies, 2/7, combined into a provisional company under Captain Robert J. Polson; a section of 81s each from 2/7 and 3/7's Weapons Companies; and a communications detachment from 3/7. Major Maurice E. Roach, regimental S-4 placed in command, realized that such a jury-rigged outfit might be subject to morale problems. Noting that one of the men had made a neckerchief out of a torn green parachute, he seized upon the idea as a means of appealing to unit pride. Soon all the men were sporting green neckerchiefs, and Roach gave the new unit added distinction by christening it the Damnation Battalion after adopting "Damnation" as the code word.⁹

Beginning in the early morning hours of the 30th, regroupment was the chief activity at Yudam-ni. Enemy opposition during the night took the form of scattered small-arms fire varied with minor probing attacks. This comparative lull lasted until 0710, when Item Company of 3/5 beat off an enemy assault on Hill 1282 (North Ridge) with the support of Marine air strikes and 81mm mortar fire. In the same area George Company had a brisk fire fight from 1315 to dusk.

The plan of the regroupment envisioned a gradual withdrawal from the north and west of Yudam-ni by RCT-5 for the purpose of relieving units of RCT-7 and enabling them to extend the perimeter southward from the village (see Map 23). It fell to 2/5 to execute the most diffi-

⁸ CG 1stMarDiv msg to COs 5th and 7thMars, 1920 30 Nov 50. See also Smith, *Notes*, 923-924.

⁹ This account of the organization of the "Damnation" Battalion is based upon: Narrative of Maj W. R. Earney, n. d., 9-10; MajGen H. L. Litzenberg ltr, 7 Aug 56; LtCol M. E. Roach Comments, 27 Nov 56. "I trust," commented Gen Litzenberg dryly, "that the green neckerchiefs were all made of *torn* parachutes!"



BREAKING OFF ACTION

30 Nov 50

CCF Positions



MAP-23

cult maneuver of the day. Roise's battalion held a line stretching from Hill 1426 on Southwest Ridge along the high ground to 3/5's positions on Hill 1282. After disengaging with the help of Marine air and artillery, 2/5 gave up Hill 1426 and pulled back nearly a mile, relieving elements of 3/7 on the left. Roise's new line included Hill 1294 on Southwest Ridge, overlooking the MSR, and extended northeast to Hill 1282 as before. Meanwhile 1/5 continued to hold a defensive line from Hill 1240 eastward to Hill 1167.

These movements freed 3/7 to re-deploy to new positions astride the MSR about 4000 yards south of Yudam-ni. In this same general area, 1/7 continued to block the valley to the southwest while holding Hill 1276, of South Ridge, about 2500 yards south of the village.

"The question of whether we should make these movements during daylight or at night was a difficult one," said Colonel Litzenberg. "We finally decided to make the movements in daylight when we could have advantage of observation for air cover and artillery. The movement, piecemeal by battalion, was successfully executed."¹⁰

The enemy took surprisingly little advantage of the readjustment. Movements were completed in an orderly and methodical manner as the units drew rations and ammunition for the breakout. Preparations were made for the destruction of all equipment which could not be carried out, and air drops of ammunition and other supplies were received.

As a solution for the problem of casualty evacuation, General Smith had suggested the construction of an OY strip. A start was made at 0900 on the 30th by the TD-18 dozers of Major McReynolds' artillery battalion, but the area came under enemy fire the next day and the nearly completed strip could be used only twice.¹¹

Joint Planning for Breakout

The plan, as finally agreed upon, called for a combination of the two solutions. Since it was essential to relieve hard-pressed Fox Company and secure vital Toktong Pass prior to the arrival of the main column, one force would advance across country. And since it would have

¹⁰ Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 55.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, McReynolds Comments, 15 Aug 56.

been physically impossible to carry the wounded over the mountains, the main body would fight its way along the road to Toktong Pass.¹²

The over-all plan for the Yudam-ni breakout, after being flown to Hagaru by helicopter for General Smith's approval, was incorporated into Joint OpnO 2-50. This directive, later modified by fragmentary orders, was issued in the morning of 1 December 1950.

It meant dispensing with the vehicles and heavy equipment of the cross-country force. Only the barest military necessities could be taken by men loaded down with ammunition while struggling through snowdrifts.

The unit selected for the attempt was the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Davis. The plan of maneuver called for him to strike off across the mountain tops under cover of darkness on the night of 1 December. As the other units moved out astride the MSR from Yudam-ni to Hagaru, 3/5 was to be the advance guard.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's battalion had the mission of passing through 3/7 to seize the commanding ground on both sides of the road and lead the way for the rest of the Yudam-ni troops. Thus the attacks of 1/7 and 3/5 would converge in the general area of Fox Hill and Toktong Pass.

The point of the advance was to be the only Marine tank to reach Yudam-ni while the MSR was still open. It was left stranded after the recall of the crew to Hagaru; but Staff Sergeant Russell A. Munsell and another crewman were flown up from Hagaru by helicopter at Colonel Litzenberg's request. They were to man Tank D-23 when it moved out with the point. Plans also called for a battery of 3/11 to advance near the head of the column, so that it could go into position near Sinhung-ni and provide covering fires for the rearguard while other artillery units displaced.

The 4th Battalion of the 11th Marines had orders to fire most of its 155mm ammunition before departure. All the men who could be spared from this unit were formed into nine provisional infantry platoons. Two were assigned to reinforce the 7th Marines and three to the 5th Marines; four were retained under Major McReynold's com-

¹² This section is derived from: RCT-5 and RCT-7 *Joint OpnO 2-50*, 1 Dec 50; 5thMar SAR, 26-27; 3/5 SAR, 15; 7thMar SAR, 23; Smith, *Notes*, 923-927; Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 58-59; Col J. L. Stewart Comments, n. d.; LtCol R. V. Fridrich interv, 21 Apr 56; Narrative of LtCol R. G. Davis, 11 Jan 53; Taplett Comments, 9 Aug 56; Roach Comments, 27 Nov 56; McReynolds Comments, 15 Aug 56.

mand to protect the flanks of the vehicle train. It was further prescribed that the guns of 4/11 were to bring up the rear of the convoy, so that the road would not be blocked in the event of any of its vehicles becoming immobilized.

Only drivers and seriously wounded men were permitted to ride the trucks in the middle of the column along with critical equipment and supplies. Since all additional space in the vehicles would doubtless be needed for casualties incurred in the breakout as well as Fox Company casualties, it was decided not to bring out the dead from Yudam-ni. A field burial was conducted by chaplains for 85 officers and men.¹³

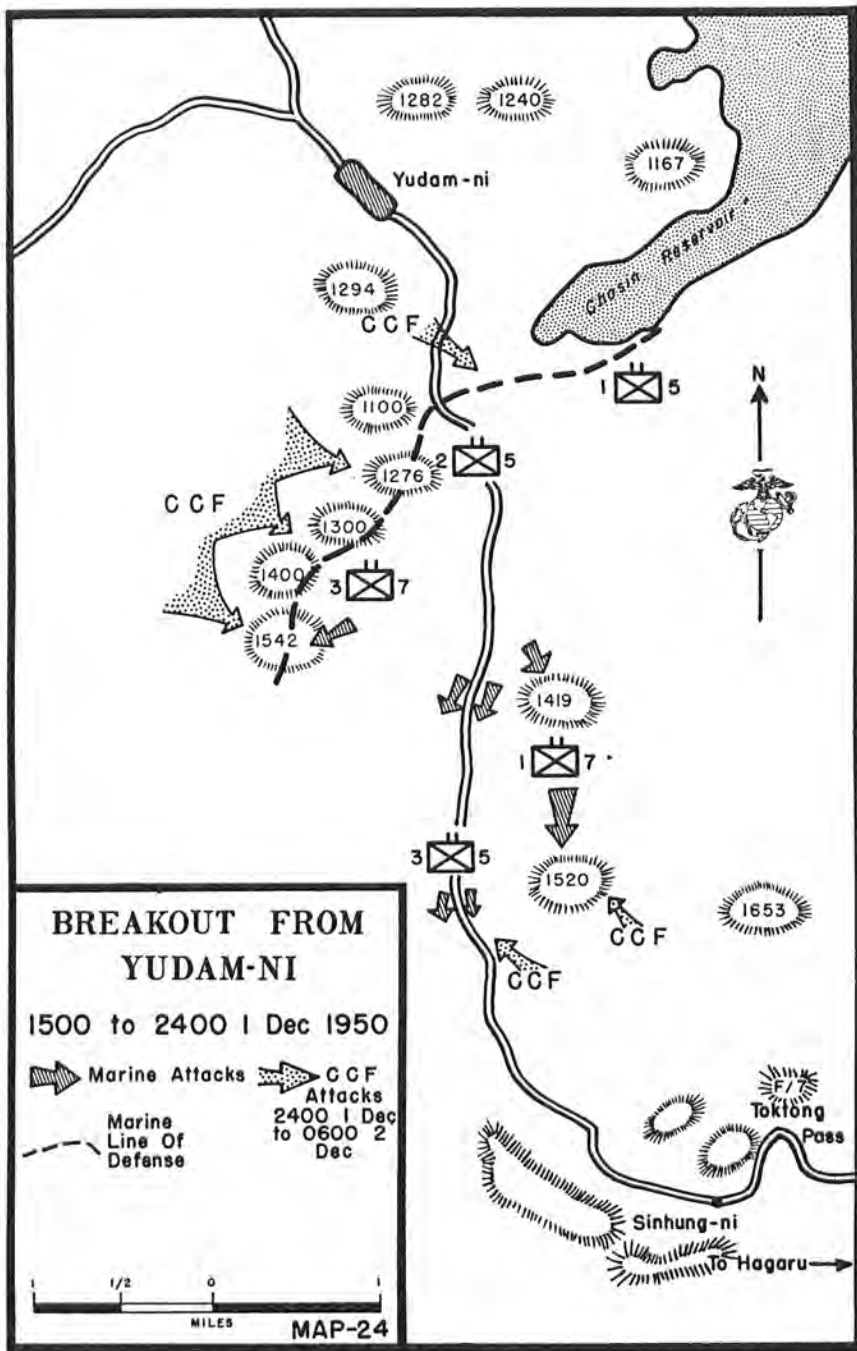
All available Marine aircraft were to be on station. Moreover, carrier planes of TF 77 had been released from other missions by the Fifth AF to reinforce the aircraft of the 1st MAW in direct support of the Yudam-ni troops.

The Fight for Hills 1419 and 1542

The transition from planning to execution began on the morning of 1 December. Only the 1st and 3d Battalions of RCT-5 were left to the north of Yudam-ni, and pulling them out was to prove equivalent to letting loose of the tiger's tail.

The 3d Battalion began its withdrawal at 0800, followed 90 minutes later by the 1st. The initial phases of the maneuver were carried out without great difficulty. The first major problem came when 3/5's last unit, George Company, pulled down from Hill 1282 (see Map 24). There the Marines had been in such close contact with the enemy that grenades were the main weapon of both sides. The problem of preventing the Chinese from swarming over the top of the ridge at the critical moment and pursuing the Marines down the slope was solved by First Lieutenant Daniel Greene, the FAC, with a dummy run by close supporting aircraft. While the first pass of the Corsairs kept the Communists down, Captain Chester R. Hermanson commenced his withdrawal. As soon as his men moved out at a safe distance he signalled to the FAC, who called for live runs of Marine air in coordination with the fires directed by the artillery liaison officer, First Lieutenant Henry

¹³ After the cease-fire of July 1953, the remains were returned to the United States, in accordance with the terms of the Korean Armistice.



G. Ammer. First Lieutenant Arthur E. House's 81mm mortar platoon also rendered skillful support during the withdrawal.¹⁴

The ancient ruse was so successful that George Company disengaged without a single casualty. Ammunition left behind by the rifle platoons was detonated just as the rockets, bombs, and napalm of the Corsairs hit the Chinese, followed by artillery and mortar shells. Hill 1282 seemed to erupt in one tremendous explosion. While Captain Hermanson's men crossed the bridge south of the burning town, an engineer demolitions crew waited to destroy the span.

The rear guard unit for the withdrawal of the two battalions was First Lieutenant John R. Hancock's Baker Company of 1/5. He felt that his best chance would be to "sneak off" Hill 1240. Accordingly he requested that no supporting fires be furnished Baker Company, except at his request. Making very effective use of his light machine guns to cover his withdrawal with a spray of fire, Hancock disengaged without a casualty.

The next stage of the regroupment was carried out in preparation for the attacks of 3/5 and 1/7. In order to clear the way on both sides of the MSR, 3/7 (minus How Company) moved out at 0900 on 1 December to attack Hill 1542 while How Company went up against Hill 1419.

Joint OpnO 1-50 was modified meanwhile by verbal instructions directing 2/5, instead of 3/5, to relieve 1/7 on Hill 1276, thus freeing Colonel Davis' battalion for its assigned mission. The 1st Battalion of RCT-5 took positions stretching from Hill 1100 on the west side of the MSR to the low ground southeast of the arm of the Reservoir. This meant that after 3/7 (-) seized Hill 1542, three Marine infantry battalions would occupy a defensive line about three and a half miles in length, stretching diagonally northeast from that position to the arm of the Reservoir, with Hill 1276 as its central bastion.¹⁵

Shortly before dusk Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3/5 arrived in position to pass through Lieutenant Colonel Harris' 3/7. The two battalion commanders agreed that 3/5 would execute the movement even though

¹⁴ The description of the withdrawal of 1/5 and 3/5 is based on: 5thMar SAR, 26; 1/5 SAR, 15-16; 3/5 SAR, 15; LtCol R. D. Taplett and Maj R. E. Whipple, "Darkhorse Sets the Pace," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxvii, no. 6 (Jun 53), 22-23; Alvarez ltr, 18 Oct 55; Taplett Comments, 9 Aug 56; LtCol J. W. Stevens, II, Comments, 25 Jul 56.

¹⁵ 5thMar SAR, 26-27; 7thMar SAR, 23; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; 1/5 SAR, 15-16; 2/5 SAR, 21-22; 3/5 SAR, 15. CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1935 1 Dec 50.

3/7 had not yet secured its objectives, and 3/5 attacked astride the MSR at 1500.¹⁶

Harris' battalion had been having it hot and heavy all day on Hills 1419 and 1542 after jumping off at 0900. These objectives were too far apart for a mutually supported attack and the Chinese defended the difficult terrain with tenacity.

Item Company, reinforced by artillerymen and headquarters troops, made slow progress west of the road against the Chinese dug in on Hill 1542. At 1700 George Company moved into position on the left. Both companies attempted an assault but the 3/7 report states, "Each attack by 'I' Co and 'G' Co never reached full momentum before it was broken up." One platoon of Item Company reached the military crest before being repulsed. When night fell, the Marines were still on the eastern slopes of 1542.¹⁷

On Hill 1419, about 1000 yards east of the road, How Company of 3/7 met stiff opposition from Chinese dug in along four finger ridges as well as the main spur leading to the topographical crest. It became evident that How Company alone could not seize the hill and about noon Able Company of Davis' battalion joined the attack, on How's left.

The heavy undergrowth gave concealment to the enemy, though it also offered footholds to the Marines scrambling up the steep and icy slopes. Air strikes were laid down just ahead of them, blasting the Chinese with bombs, rockets, and 20mm fire. Artillery support, however, was limited by the relative blindness of the forward observer in the brush, but mortars succeeded in knocking out several enemy positions. How Company's attack had come to a standstill because of casualties which included Lieutenant Harris. First Lieutenant Eugenous M. Hovatter's Able Company regained the momentum, thanks to the efforts of First Lieutenant Leslie C. Williams' 1st Platoon. Aided by How and by Baker, which was committed late in the afternoon, Able Company secured Hill 1419 about 1930. Thus the jump-off point for the 1/7 advance across the mountain tops had been seized.

After setting up hasty defenses, Davis directed that all dead and wounded be evacuated to 3/5's aid station on the road. How Company was attached to his battalion by order of Colonel Litzenberg, since all units had been thinned by casualties. Then the battalion tail was pulled

¹⁶ Taplett Comments, 9 Aug 56.

¹⁷ 3/7 SAR, n. p.

up the mountain and the last physical tie broken with other Marine units in the Yudam-ni area.¹⁸

The Marines had seized the initiative, never again to relinquish it during the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

March of 1/7 Over the Mountains

Planning at the battalion level was done by Davis, his executive officer, Major Raymond V. Fridrich, and his S-3, Major Thomas B. Tighe. It was decided to take only two of the 81mm mortars and six heavy machine guns. They were to be manned with double crews, so that enough ammunition could be carried to keep them in action.

Pack-set radios (AN/GRC-9) were to provide positive communications in case the portable sets (SCR-300) would not reach to the Yudam-ni perimeter. The artillery liaison officer was to carry a pack set (SCR-610) to insure artillery communication.¹⁹

All personnel not sick or wounded were to participate, leaving behind enough walking wounded or frostbite cases to drive the vehicles and move the gear left behind with the regimental train. Extra litters were to be taken, each serving initially to carry additional mortar and machine gun ammunition; and all men were to carry sleeping bags not only for the protection of the wounded but also to save their own lives if the column should be cut off in the mountains for several days. Every man was to start the march with an extra bandolier of small arms ammunition, and personnel of the reserve company and headquarters group were to carry an extra round of 81mm mortar ammunition up the first mountain for replenishment of supplies depleted at that point.

After driving the enemy from the topographical crest of Hill 1419, the four companies were not permitted a breathing spell. Davis feared the effects of the extreme (16 degrees below zero) cold on troops drenched with sweat from clawing their way up the mountain. He pressed the reorganization with all possible speed, therefore, after no

¹⁸ 3/7 SAR, n. p.; R. G. Davis narrative, 11 Jan 53; Fridrich interv, 21 Apr 56; CO 7thMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1935 1 Dec 50; LtCol R. G. Davis interv by Capt K. W. Shutts and A. Z. Freeman, 6 Apr 51; Maj E. M. Hovatter Comments, 19 Jul '56.

¹⁹ This section, except when otherwise noted, is based on Davis narrative; Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51; Fridrich interv, 21 Apr 56; R. G. Davis interv, 6 Apr 51; and Capt W. J. Davis interv, 4 Jun 56.

enemy contacts were reported by patrols ranging to the southeast. And at 2100 on the night of 1 December the column set out in this order:

Baker Company	First Lieutenant Kurcaba
1/7 Command Group	Lieutenant Colonel Davis
Able Company	First Lieutenant Hovatter
Charlie Company	Captain Morris
Headquarters Group	Major Fridrich
How Company	Second Lieutenant Newton

The night was dark but a few stars showed over the horizon in the general direction to be taken. They served as a guide, with a prominent rock mass being designated the first objective.

The snow-covered peaks all looked alike in the darkness, and the guide stars were lost to sight when the column descended into valleys. Repeated compass orientations of the map examined by flashlight under a poncho never checked out. The artillery was called upon to place white phosphorus on designated hills, but the splash of these rounds could seldom be located.

The point was slowed by the necessity of breaking trail in snow that had drifted knee-deep in places. After a path had been beaten, the icy footing became treacherous for the heavily burdened Marines. Some painful falls were taken on the downhill slopes by men who had to climb the finger ridges on hands and knees.

Apparently the enemy had been caught by complete surprise, for the Marines had the desolate area to themselves. A more immediate danger was loss of direction, and the head of the column veered off to the southwest while crossing the second valley. A drift in this direction would eventually take the battalion toward the enemy-held road to Hagaru (see Map 25), which had been scheduled by the Marine artillery for harassing and interdiction fires.

Radio failures kept Kurcaba, at the point, from receiving messages sent in warning. An attempt was made to communicate by word of mouth, but the shouts from behind often did not penetrate to ears protected from the cold by parka hoods. At last the loss of direction became so alarming that Davis himself hurried forward with his radio operator and runner. In the darkness he lost touch with them and floundered on alone, panting and stumbling.

It took such effort to overtake the point that he did not make it until the men were scrambling up the next steep ridge. There the westward drift was corrected just in time, for the battalion was running into its first CCF opposition.

The column had been heading up Hill 1520, the eastern and western slopes of which were held by the enemy. An increasing volume of small-arms fire was received as Davis gave his company commanders orders to reorganize units in preparation for attack. Exhausted though the men were, they summoned a burst of energy and advanced in two assault columns supported by 81mm mortars and heavy machine guns. Now the exertion of carrying extra ammunition paid dividends as Baker and Charlie Companies closed in on a CCF position held in estimated platoon strength. Some of the Chinese were surprised while asleep or numbed with the cold, and the Marines destroyed the enemy force at a cost of only a few men wounded.

The attack cleared the enemy from the eastern slope of Hill 1520, but distant small-arms fire was received from ridges across the valley to the east. Davis called a halt for reorganization, since the troops had obviously reached the limit of their endurance. Suddenly they began collapsing in the snow—"like dominoes," as the commanding officer later described the alarming spectacle. And there the men lay, oblivious to the cold, heedless of the Chinese bullets ricocheting off the rocks.

A strange scene ensued in the dim starlight as company officers and NCOs shook and cuffed the prostrate Marines into wakefulness. The officers could sympathize even while demanding renewed efforts, for the sub-zero cold seemed to numb the mind as well as body.

Davis had even requested his company commanders to check every order he gave, just to make sure his own weary brain was functioning accurately. At 0300 he decided to allow the men a rest—the first in 20 hours of continuous fighting or marching under a double burden. As a preliminary, the battalion commander insisted that the perimeter be buttoned up and small patrols organized within companies to insure a 25 per cent alert. Then the pack radio was set up to establish the night's first contact with the regimental CP, and the men took turns at sleeping as an eerie silence fell over the wasteland of ice and stone.

Attack of 3/5 on 1-2 December

Returning to the Yudam-ni area, it may be recalled that Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3/5 had passed through 3/7 at 1500 on 1 December with a mission of attacking astride the MSR to lead the way for the main column. Tank D-23, a How Company platoon and a platoon of

Able Company engineers set the pace, followed by the rest of How Company and the other two rifle companies. After an advance of 1400 yards the battalion column was stopped by heavy CCF fire from both sides. How and Item Companies fanned out west and east of the road and a longdrawn firefight ensued before the Marines cleared the enemy from their flanks at 1930.²⁰

Artillery support for the breakout was provided by 1/11 and 3/11 (minus Battery H). The plan called for 1/11 to take the main responsibility for furnishing supporting fires at the outset while 3/11 displaced as soon as possible to the vicinity of Sinhung-ni, whence the last lap of the march to Hagaru could be effectively covered. The 1st Battalion would then join the vehicle column and move with it to Hagaru.²¹

Taplett gave 3/5 a brief rest after securing his first objectives—the high ground on both sides of the road just opposite the northern spurs of Hill 1520. Then he ordered a renewal of the attack shortly before midnight. How Company on the right met only moderate opposition, but was held up by the inability of Item Company to make headway against Chinese dug in along the western slope of Hill 1520. Neither 1/7 nor 3/5 had any idea at the moment that they were simultaneously engaged on opposite sides of the same great land mass, though separated by enemy groups as well as terrain of fantastic difficulties. So rugged was this mile-high mountain that the two Marine outfits might as well have been in different worlds as far as mutual support was concerned.

Item Company stirred up such a hornet's nest on the western slope that Captain Harold O. Schrier was granted permission by the battalion commander to return to his jump-off position, so that he could better defend the MSR. There he was attacked by Chinese who alternated infantry attacks with mortar bombardments. Radio communication failed and runners sent from the battalion CP to Item Company lost their way. Thus the company was isolated during an all-night defensive fight. Second Lieutenant Willard S. Peterson took over the command after Schrier received a second wound.

Taplett had ordered his reserve company, George, and his attached engineers into defensive positions to the rear of Item Company. The engineers on the right flank were also hit by the Chinese and had sev-

²⁰ Descriptions of 3/5 operations in this section are based on the 3/5 SAR, 15; Taplett and Whipple, "Darkhorse Sets the Pace," II, 46-50; Taplett Comments, 9 Aug 56.

²¹ 11thMar SAR, 7; MCB Study, II-C-72.

eral wounded, including the platoon commander, First Lieutenant Wayne E. Richards, before repulsing the attack.

Counted CCF dead in the Item Company area totaled 342 at daybreak on the 2d, but the Marines had paid a heavy price in casualties. Less than 20 able-bodied men were left when George Company passed through to renew the attack on Hill 1520. For that matter, both George and How Companies were reduced to two-platoon strength. Taplett requested reinforcement by an additional company, and was assigned the so-called Dog-Easy composite company made up of the remnants of 2/7. This outfit moved directly down the road between George and How Companies.²²

It took George Company until 1200 to secure the western slope of Hill 1520. The composite company ran into difficulties meanwhile at a point on the MSR where the Chinese had blown a bridge over a deep stream bed and set up a roadblock defended by machine guns. While George Company attacked down a long spur above the enemy, Dog-Easy Company maneuvered in defilade to outflank him. Lieutenant Greene, the FAC, directed the F4Us on target and the ground forces were treated to a daring exhibition of close support by Corsairs which barely cleared the ridge after pulling out of their runs. The roadblock was speedily wiped out, but the vehicle column had to wait until the engineers could construct a bypass. Then the advance of 3/5 was resumed, with George and How Companies attacking on opposite sides of the MSR, and the composite company astride the road, following the tank and engineer platoons.

The Ridgerunners of Toktong Pass

All the rest of their lives the survivors of the two spearhead Marine battalions would take pride in nicknames earned during the breakout from Yudam-ni. For Taplett's outfit it was "Darkhorse," after the radio call sign of the battalion, while Davis' men felt that they had a right to be known as the "Ridgerunners of Toktong Pass."

At daybreak on 2 December, 1/7 corrected its westward drift of the previous night and attacked toward Hill 1653, a mountain only about

²² "Item Company upon relief was temporarily non-effective. In fact it ceased to exist except on paper. Some of the survivors were assigned to G/5 and the wounded who were able to walk were assigned to a provisional rifle unit organized from H&S Co and under the command of Lt George Bowman." Taplett Comments, 9 Aug 56.

a mile and a half north of Fox Hill. Davis' men got the better of several firefights at long range with CF groups on ridges to the east, but the terrain gave them more effective opposition than the enemy.²³

The radios of 1/7 could not contact Marine planes when they came on station, and relays through tactical channels proved ineffective. Moreover, all efforts to reach Fox Company by radio had failed. This situation worried the battalion commander, who realized that he was approaching within range of friendly 81mm mortar fire from Fox Hill.

The ancient moral weapon of surprise stood Davis and his men in good stead, however, as the column encountered little opposition on the western slope of Hill 1653. How Company, bringing up the rear with the wounded men, came under an attack which threatened for a moment to endanger the casualties. But after the litters were carried forward, Newton managed to keep the Chinese at a respectful distance without aid from the other companies.

Charlie Company was given the mission of seizing a spur covering the advance of Able and Baker companies east from Hill 1520 to Hill 1653. The command group had just passed Morris on this position when the radio operator shouted to Davis:

"Fox Six on the radio, sir."

Captain Barber's offer to send out a patrol to guide 1/7 to his position was declined, but Fox Company did control the strike by planes of VMF-312 which covered the attack of Kurcaba's company on the final objective—a ridge about 400 yards north of Fox Hill. Aided by the air attack and supporting 81mm mortar fires, Baker Company seized the position and Able Company the northern portion of Hill 1653. It was 1125 on the morning of 2 December 1950 when the first men of Baker Company reached Fox Company's lines.

Able Company held its position on Hill 1653 until the rest of the battalion was on Fox Hill. After grounding their packs, men from the forward companies went back to help carry the 22 wounded men into the perimeter. While supervising this task, the regimental surgeon, Lieutenant Peter A. Arioli, (MC) USN, was instantly killed by a Chinese sniper's bullet. There were no other death casualties, though two men had to be placed in improvised strait jackets after cracking mentally

²³ This section is based on R. G. Davis narrative, 11 Jan 53; Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51; Fridrich interv, 21 Apr 56; R. G. Davis interv, 6 Apr 51; and W. G. Davis interv, 4 June 56; Col R. G. Davis Comments, 20 Aug 56; Hovatter Comments, 19 Jul 5.

and physically under the strain. Both died before evacuation was possible.

The first objective had been reached, but there was to be no rest until Toktong Pass was secured. Baker Company paused on Fox Hill only long enough for Kurcaba's men to eat a hasty meal of air-dropped rations. Then they moved out to seize the high ground commanding the vital terrain feature at a point where the road describes a loop from north to south. Able Company followed shortly afterwards and the two outfits set up a single perimeter for the night while the rest of the battalion manned perimeters on the high ground east of Fox Hill. Barber's men remained in their positions.

Five days and nights of battle had left Fox Company with 118 casualties—26 KIA, 3 MIA, and 89 WIA. Six of the seven officers were wounded, and practically all the unwounded men suffered from frost-bite and digestive ills.

CCF Attacks on Hills 1276 and 1542

While the two spearhead battalions advanced, the Marine elements in the rear could not complain of being neglected by the enemy. All three infantry battalions were kept busy with CCF attacks which persisted from midnight until long after daybreak (see Map 24).

Lieutenant Colonel Roise's 2/5, which had been designated as rear-guard, was hit on Hill 1276 in the early morning hours of 2 December. Under cover of rifle and machine-gun fire, the Chinese advanced on the Fox Company positions with their "inverted wedge" assault formation. Testimony as to its effectiveness is found in the 2/5 report:

The [Chinese] . . . used fire and movement to excellent advantage. They would direct a frontal attack against our positions while other elements of their attacking force moved in closer to "F" Company flanks in an attempt at a double envelopment. Then in turn the forces on both flanks would attack while the forces directly to our front would move closer to our position. In this, the enemy, by diverting our attention in the above manner, were able to maneuver their forces to within hand grenade range of our positions.

One Fox platoon, assailed from three sides, was forced to withdraw at 0110 and consolidate with the rest of the company. At 0200 the FAC requested an air strike from two night fighters on station. The aircraft were directed on the target by 60mm mortar white phosphorus bursts and conducted effective strafing and rocket runs within 200 yards

of the Marine front line. In all, five aircraft of VMF(N)-542 were employed with excellent results during the night.

At 0230 Roise directed Fox Company to retake the left-flank hill from which the platoon had been driven. Two attempts were made before daybreak with the support of 4.2-inch mortar fire, but enemy machine guns stopped the assault. At 0730 an air strike was requested. After strafing and rocket runs, Fox Company fought its way to the crest, only to find the position untenable because of machine-gun fire from the reverse slope. At 1000 the Corsairs blasted the enemy for 25 minutes with napalm and 500-pound bombs, and CCF troops were observed vacating the objective area. It was nearly time for the battalion to displace as the rearguard, however, and the enemy was left in possession of a scarred and scorched piece of real estate.

Both Dog and Easy Companies received probing attacks which the Chinese did not attempt to push home. At daybreak some of them broke and ran along the Dog Company front, throwing away their weapons as they scattered in disorder. Marine fire pursued the retreating Communists and cut down many of them. Captain Arthur D. Challacombe's provisional company of artillerymen on Dog Company's right counted over 50 dead in front of its positions.²⁴

On the eastern flank 1/5 came under attack about 2100 by 75-100 Chinese who crossed the arm of the reservoir on ice. Mortar and artillery fire drove them back at 0100 with heavy losses, but attempts at infiltration continued throughout the night. In the morning 51 CCF dead were counted in front of one Charlie Company machine gun, and total enemy KIA were estimated at 200.²⁵

At the other end of the Marine line, a CCF attack hit 3/7(-) on Hill 1542. The assault force, according to the enemy report, consisted of Sung-Wei-shan's 9th Company, 3d Battalion, 235th Regiment, the 5th Company of 2/235, and apparently two other companies of 3/235. All were units of the 79th CCF Division, and their mission was "to annihilate the defending enemy before daylight."²⁶

George and Item Companies of 3/7, following their repulse from the upper reaches of Hill 1542, had formed a defensive perimeter on the eastern slope. As reinforcements the depleted units were assigned a composite outfit known as Jig Company and consisting of about 100

²⁴ 2/5 SAR, 22; Stewart Comments; McReynolds Comments, 15 Aug 56.

²⁵ 1/5 SAR, 16; Alvarez ltr, 18 Oct 55.

²⁶ The description of the fight on Hill 1542 is derived from: ATIS *Enemy Documents: Korean Campaign*, Issue 66, 88-93; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; Litzenberg ltr, 7 Aug 56; Maj W. R. Earney ltr to Gen Litzenberg, 16 Jul 56.

cannoneers, headquarters troops, and any other elements which could be hastily put together. First Lieutenant Alfred I. Thomas, of Item Company, was placed in command of men who were for the most part strangers to him as well as to one another.

Sung led the 9th Company's attacking column. Although the Chinese account states that his men were advancing from the northwest toward the topographical crest of Hill 1542, they actually held the summit. Their attack was downhill, though some climbing of spurs and finger ridges may have been necessary. After reconnoitering to a point within 25 yards of the Marines, the Chinese jumped off at 0430 with the support of fires from battalion weapons. Relying on the "inverted wedge," the attackers bored in alternately right and left while seeking an opportunity for a knockout blow. The 2d Platoon on the Chinese left took a severe mauling, losing its commander and almost half of its men. The other two platoons had heavy casualties but succeeded in routing the jury-rigged Jig Company. Since it was a composite outfit not yet 24 hours old, there is no record of either its operations or losses. Apparently, however, a majority of the men straggled back to their original units. Lieutenant Thomas, who had commanded ably under difficult circumstances, rejoined First Lieutenant William E. Johnson's Item Company with such men as he had left. The Marines gave ground slowly under Chinese pressure until day-break, when they held positions abreast of George Company, which had not been heavily engaged.

The two companies were reduced to a total of fewer than 200 men. After being reinforced by H&S Company personnel, they formed a defensive line in an arc stretching from the MSR about 1100 yards and taking in the eastern slopes of Hill 1542.²⁷

Apparently the Communists, like military forces everywhere, did not err on the light side when estimating the casualties of opponents. The Marine losses for the night were listed in the CCF report as "killed, altogether 100 enemy troops." This figure, indicating total casualties of several hundred, is manifestly too high. Owing to the loss of 7th Marines records, the statistics for Item Company are not available, but it does not appear that more than 30 to 40 men were killed or wounded.

²⁷ General Litzenberg points out that "it was necessary for 3/7 to maintain protection for the main column until it passed by Hill 1542. They [3/7] held high enough to keep Chinese small arms fire at a sufficient distance from the Road." Litzenberg Comments, 7 Aug 56.

Advance of Darkhorse on 2-3 December

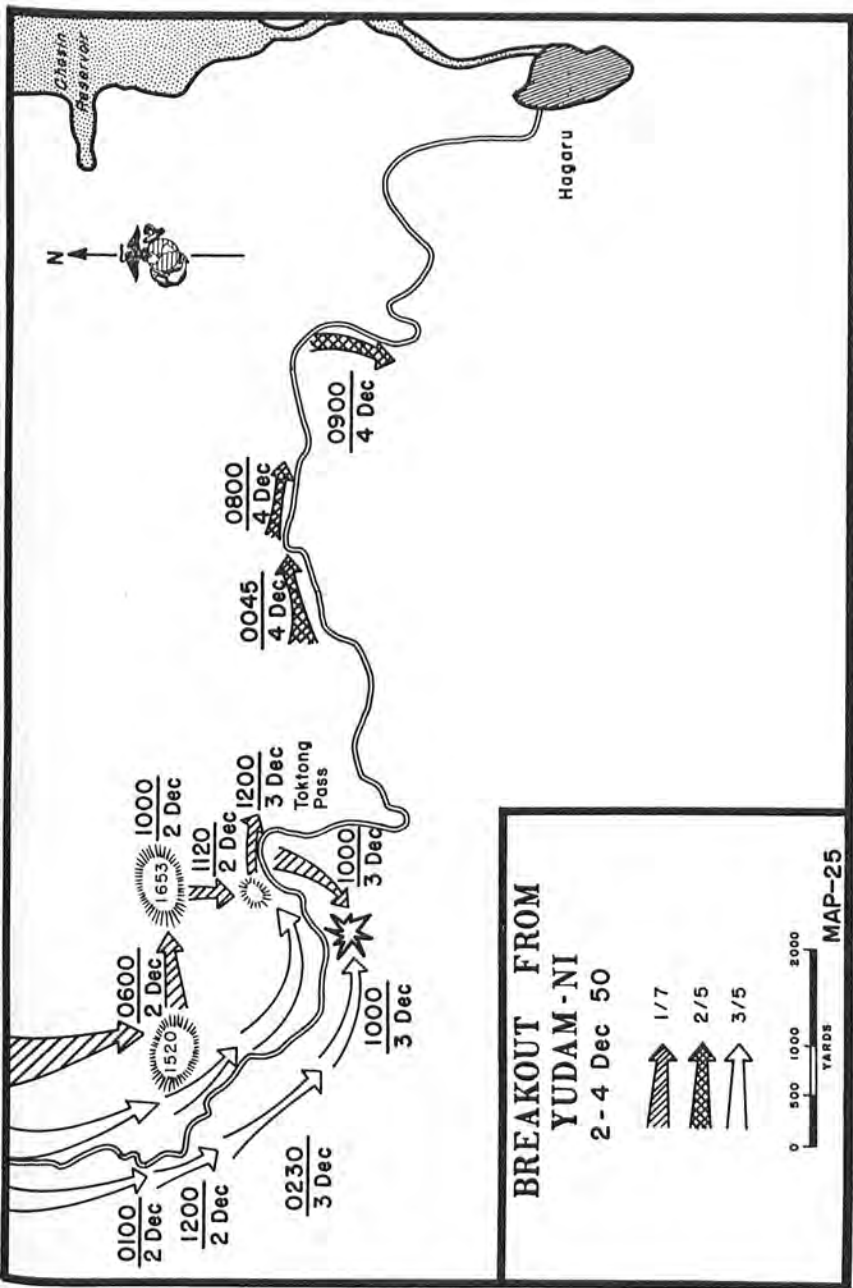
Several CCF daylight attacks in platoon strength were received between Hills 1542 and 1276 during the morning hours of 2 December. All Marine units in this area were in process of disengaging, so that the emphasis was placed on breaking off action rather than attempting to defend ground soon to be evacuated.

The vehicle train in the rear made slow progress during the afternoon of 2 December. Infantry strength was not sufficient to occupy all the commanding terrain during the passage of the motor column, and CCF groups infiltrated back into areas vacated by Marine riflemen. Effective air support reduced most of these efforts to harassing attacks, but Marine vehicle drivers were singled out for special attention, making it necessary to find replacements among near-by troops.

To 1/5 fell the mission of furnishing close-in flank protection on the left. Marine air and artillery supported infantry attacks clearing the flanks and the column jolted on with frequent halts. The night passed without incident except for a CCF attack on 3/11. George Battery gunners had to employ direct fire to repulse the Communists, and a 105mm howitzer was lost as well as several vehicles.

Darkhorse, leading the way, was meanwhile fighting for nearly every foot of the road during the advance of 2 December. George Company on the left went up against Hill 1520 while Dog-Easy moved astride the MSR. By noon George had secured its objective. Dog-Easy advanced against moderate resistance to a point about 300 yards beyond Hill 1520 where a demolished bridge had spanned a rock ravine as the road turns from south to east. Here Chinese automatic weapons fire halted the column until a strike by 12 Corsairs cleared the enemy from the ravine. On the right Captain Harold B. Williamson's How Company was to have joined in the attack, moving through the high ground south of the bend in the road. A Chinese strongpoint delayed its advance and How was pinned down by heavy enemy fire while attempting to cross a stream bed halfway to its objective. The last air strike of the day freed Captain Williamson's unit, which secured its objective after dark. During the last minutes of daylight, the engineer platoon, now commanded by Technical Sergeant Edwin L. Knox, constructed a bypass around the blasted bridge. About 1900 the first vehicles followed the tank across.

Taplett's battalion continued its slow progress with George and How



Companies clearing the high ground on opposite sides of the road while Dog-Easy moved astride the MSR. At about 0200 on the 3d the advance came to a halt 1000 yards short of Fox Hill. Dog-Easy, which had suffered heavy casualties, particularly among its key NCOs, had reached the limit of exhaustion, and 3/5 secured for the rest of the night. Not until daylight did How Company discover that it had halted 300 yards short of its final objective, the hill mass southwest of Fox Hill.

At dawn on 3 December the ground was covered with six inches of new snow, hiding the scars of war and giving a deceptively peaceful appearance to the Korean hills as the Marine column got under way again with Sergeant Knox's engineers at the point, just behind Sergeant Munsell's lone tank. Alternately serving as engineers and riflemen, this platoon came through with 17 able-bodied men left out of the 48 who started.

Dog-Easy Company having been rendered ineffective by its casualties, Taplett moved George Company down from the left flank to advance astride the road. First Lieutenant Charles D. Mize took over the reorganized outfit, assisted by Second Lieutenant August L. Camaratta. The two riddled Dog-Easy platoons were combined with George Company under the command of Second Lieutenant John J. Cahill and Technical Sergeant Don Faber.

Cahill had the distinction of leading the platoon which fought the first action of Marine ground forces in the Korean conflict. But it hardly seemed possible on this sub-zero December morning that the encounter had taken place barely four months before, or that the temperature that August day had been 102° in the non-existent shade. Korea was a land of extremes.

Darkhorse was not far from a junction with the Ridgerunners. The night of 2-3 December had passed quietly in Toktong Pass, where the five companies occupied separate perimeters. The Marines on Fox Hill lighted warming fires in the hope of tempting the enemy to reveal his positions. The Chinese obliged by firing from two near-by ridges. One CCF group was dug in along a southern spur of the hill held by Able and Baker Companies, and the other occupied a ridge extending eastward beyond Toktong Pass in the direction of Hagaru.

Simultaneous attacks in opposite directions were launched by 1/7. Davis led Morris' and Newton's companies against the CCF force barring the way to Hagaru. Tighe moved out with Kurcaba's and Hovatter's companies meanwhile against a larger CCF force on high ground

south of the big bend in the road. This stroke took the Chinese by surprise. As they fell back in disorder, the Communists did not realize that they were blundering into the path of the oncoming Marines of Williamson's How/5, attacking south of the MSR. Colonel Litzenberg, who had been informed by radio, turned to Lieutenant Colonel Murray and said, "Ray, notify your Third Battalion commander that the Chinese are running southwest into his arms!"²⁸

Taplett was unaware that Tighe's attack was forcing about a battalion of Chinese into his lap. He had spotted the Chinese in strength on the high ground south of the road when day broke. Attempts to lay artillery on the Chinese having failed because of the range from Hagaru, the 3/5 commander called for an air strike. The overcast lifted just as the Corsairs came on station. They hit the demoralized Communists with napalm and rockets while the 81mm mortars and heavy machine guns of the two converging Marine forces opened up with everything they had. Probably the greatest slaughter of the Yudam-ni breakout ended at 1030 with the CCF battalion "completely eliminated," as the 3/5 report phrased it, and How Company in possession of the CCF positions.

At 1300 on 3 December, after Davis had cleared the enemy from the ridge northeast of Toktong Pass, the basic maneuver of the breakout was completed by the junction of 3/5 and 1/7. Several more fights awaited Taplett's men on the way to Hagaru, but at Toktong Pass they had fulfilled their mission. That the victory had not been gained without paying a price in casualties is indicated by the following daily returns of effective strength in the three rifle companies:

Unit	1 Dec.	2 Dec.	3 Dec.	4 Dec.
George Company-----	114	96	84	80
How Company-----	180	167	131	73
Item Company-----	143	41	41	41
Total	437	304	256	194

²⁸ Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 61. Other sources for this section are as follows: LtCol Taplett interv, 8 Jun 56 and Comments, 9 and 14 Aug 56; TSgt E. L. Knox interv, 30 May 56; *MCB Study*, II-C-78-80; Taplett and Whipple, "Darkhorse Leads the Way," II, 49-50; Smith, *Notes*, 932-946; R. G. Davis narrative, 11 Jan 53; 5thMar SAR, 29; Geer, *The New Breed*, 338-341.

This is a total of 243 battle and nonbattle casualties as compared to the 144 suffered by the same units during the CCF attacks of 27 to 30 November.

Entry into Hagaru Perimeter

When the truck column with its wounded men reached Toktong Pass, it halted to receive the casualties of 1/7, 3/5, and Fox Company of 2/7. Lieutenant Commander John H. Craven, chaplain of the 7th Marines, helped to assist the litter cases into vehicles. Since there was not room for all, the walking wounded had to make room for helpless men. They complied with a courage which will never be forgotten by those who saw them struggling painfully toward Hagaru alongside the truck column.²⁹

When the tank leading the 3/5 column reached Toktong Pass it halted only long enough for Colonels Taplett and Davis to confer. D-23 then moved out and the four companies of 1/7 came down from their hillside positions and fell in behind.

Stevens' 1/5, having leap-frogged 3/5, followed next on the way to blocking positions farther east on the MSR. Taplett remained in Toktong Pass until after midnight, acting as radio relay between Colonels Litzenberg and Murray, by now in Hagaru, and 2/5 in the rear. At about midnight the 3/5 commander sent G and H Companies into the vehicle column to furnish security for the artillery, and an hour later the remainder of the battalion joined the column. Roise's 2/5, which had passed through 3/7 came next, followed by Harris' rear guard.

Interspersed among the infantry were elements of artillery and service troops with their vehicles, and the column became more scrambled after each halt.³⁰ Two observation planes of VMO-6 circled overhead to give warning of enemy concentrations. Marine planes were on station continuously during daylight hours, strafing and rocketing to the front and along both flanks. A total of 145 sorties, most of them in close air support of troops advancing along the Hagaru-Yudam-ni MSR, were flown on 3 December by the following units:³¹

²⁹ Stewart Comments.

³⁰ Sources for this section, unless otherwise noted, are the same as those for the last and: 3/1 tels to G-3 1stMarDiv, 0430 and 1715 4 Dec 50; G-3 1stMarDiv tel to 11thMar, 0730 4 Dec 50; 7thMar tels to G-3 1stMarDiv, 0830 and 0925 4 Dec 50; G-3 stMarDiv tels to 3/1, 0950 and 1330 4 Dec 50; Stevens Comments, 25 Jul 56.

³¹ MAG-33 SAR sec B 6-7; VMF-214 SAR, 5; 1stMAW HD, Dec 50.

Squadron	Sorties
VMF-214	36
VMF-323	28
VMF-212	27
VMF-312	34
VMF(N)-513	7
VMF(N)-542	13

 145

At the other end of the route the Royal Marine Commandos, reinforced by a platoon of tanks, were sent out from Hagaru at 1630 on 3 December, to drive the Chinese from the road leading into that perimeter.

Thanks to excellent air support, 1/7 met no opposition save harassing attacks. One of Davis's flanking patrols reported the flushing out of a few Chinese so exhausted by cold and hardships that they had abandoned their weapons and holed up together for warmth. If these Marines had been in a mood for such reflections, they might have recalled that the American press of late had been bemoaning the supposed decline of the nation's young manhood. UN reverses in the summer of 1950 had led editorial writers to conclude that our troops had neither the legs for long marches nor the backs for the bearing of military burdens. Mechanization had gone so far, they lamented, that we had become the servants rather than the masters of our own wheeled and tracked vehicles.

The Marines of Davis' battalion might have taken a grim satisfaction, therefore, in encountering Chinese peasants, inured all their lives to privations, whose will to fight had been broken by the hardships of the past week. These Marines had not known a full night's sleep during that week. They had subsisted on a diet of crackers varied with canned rations thawed by body heat. They had been under continuous nervous pressure as well as physical strain, and yet they were able to summon one last burst of pride when the point neared the Hagaru perimeter at 1900 on 3 December 1950. Several hundred yards from the entrance a halt was called while the men closed up into a compact column.³² Then they came in marching, their shoulders thrown back and their shoepacs beating a firm tread on the frozen road.

The Marines at the head of the column were followed by the walking

³² Since the four rifle companies had been left on key points, controlling the last two and a half miles into Hagaru, the column consisted mostly of H&S and Weapons Company personnel. Davis Comments, 20 Aug 56.

wounded and the vehicles loaded with more serious cases, some of whom had been strapped to the hoods. All casualties were given medical care and the remaining troops taken into warming tents for hot coffee. Many of them appeared dazed and uncomprehending at first. Others wandered about aimlessly with blank faces. But there were few who had suffered any psychological disturbances that could not be cleared up with a good night's sleep and some hot food.

Troops of 4/11 and 3/5 were due to arrive next at Hagaru while 1/5 and 2/5 echeloned companies forward along the MSR to provide flank protection. Not all the Chinese had lost aggressiveness, but the column had little difficulty until 0200 on 4 December. Then it came to a abrupt halt when prime movers of eight 155m howitzers ran out of diesel fuel. As far back as Sinhung-ni 150 gallons had been requested but none had been delivered.³³ While the troops ahead, including G and H of 3/5, continued on towards Hagaru, unaware of the break, a bad situation developed around the stalled guns.

Following the halting of the convoy Major Angus J. Cronin, in charge of 4/11's vehicle column, and his handful of truck drivers and cannoneers drove off a platoon of Chinese. These Marines were soon joined by Lieutenant Colonel Feehan's 1/11 and Able Company of 1/5. By the time Lieutenant Colonel Taplett arrived, the 155s had been moved off the road by Captain O. R. Lodge of 4/11, who continued in spite of a wound until more severely wounded in the head.

Roise and Stevens arrived shortly afterwards and the three battalion commanders drew up a hasty plan. While 3/5 built up a base of fire a platoon of Easy Company, 2/5, would move through the ridge north of the road to knock out the Chinese strong point. Up to this time there had been few and minor instances of panic during the breakout from Yudam-ni. But some confusion resulted when the enemy took advantage of the delay to blow a small bridge ahead and increase his rate of fire. Thus a new roadblock awaited after the howitzers were removed, and two truck drivers were killed while the engineers repaired the break. Other drivers bypassed the bridge and made a dash for safety by crossing the little stream on the ice.

A comparatively few men, giving way to panic, were endangering the entire column. Behind one of the fleeing trucks an angry warrant

³³ Lieutenant Mecker, dispatched from Hagaru with fuel, was unable to get through to the stalled artillery because of Chinese fire. Some of his men, however, did pass the Chinese block and served as part of CWO Carlson's improvised gun crew. Capt E. L. Mecker interview, 19 Jul 56.

officer pounded in pursuit, shouting some of the most sulphurous profanity that Lieutenant Colonel Taplett had ever heard.³⁴ This was CWO Allen Carlson of Baker Battery, 1/11. He disappeared around a bend in the road, only to return a moment later with a chastened driver towing a 105mm howitzer. Carlson hastily recruited a crew and set up the piece beside the road for point-blank fire at the enemy position while Taplett directed the fire of a 75mm recoilless rifle.

A Charlie Battery howitzer and a 1/5 heavy machine gun added their contribution as a platoon of Easy Company, 2/5, attacked under cover of air strikes. The Chinese position was overrun at 0830 at an estimated cost to the enemy of 150 dead. Two other attacks were launched by infantry units of Roise's battalion on the high ground to the left before the MSR was cleared.

When the 155mm howitzers were pushed off the road, it had been assumed that they would be retrieved. Only 1000 yards farther down the MSR was a cache of air-dropped diesel fuel, but efforts to bring back replenishments were frustrated by enemy fire. Attempts at recovery by the British Marines failed later that day, and orders were given for the destruction by air of the eight stalled howitzers plus a ninth which had previously been abandoned after skidding off the road. This was the largest loss of weapons in the Yudam-ni breakout.

At 1400 on 4 December the last elements of the rearguard, 3/7, entered the perimeter and the four-day operation passed into history. Some 1500 casualties were brought to Hagaru, a third of them being in the non-battle category, chiefly frostbite cases. It had taken the head of the column about 59 hours to cover the 14 miles, and the rear units 79 hours.

"Under the circumstances of its execution," commented General Smith, "the breakout was remarkably well conducted. Since centralized control of the widespread elements was a difficult task, particularly with a joint command, unit commanders were required to exercise a high degree of initiative. . . . The spirit and discipline of the men under the most adverse conditions of weather and terrain was another highly important factor contributing to the success of the operation and also reflecting the quality of the leadership being exercised."³⁵

³⁴ Taplett interv, 8 Jun 56.

³⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 948.

CHAPTER XIII

Regroupment at Hagaru

4312 Casualties Evacuated by Air—537 Replacements Flown to Hagaru—Air Drops of Ammunition—Planning for Breakout to Koto-ri—3/1 Relieved by RCT-5 at Hagaru—East Hill Retaken from Chinese—Attack of RCT-7 to the South—Advance of the Division Trains

THE MARINES AT Hagaru would have been astonished to learn how much anxiety over their "encirclement" was being currently felt in the United States. It had been a rude shock for Americans who believed that the troops in Korea would be "home by Christmas" to realize that the unexpected Chinese intervention had created virtually a new war. This war, moreover, was apparently going against the UN forces. On Thanksgiving Day the victory over Communist aggression had seemed almost complete, yet only a week later the headlines announced major reverses. The Eighth Army was in full retreat, and an entire Marine division was said to be "trapped."

So disturbing were the reports from Korea, newspaper readers and radio listeners could scarcely have imagined the mood of confidence prevailing at Hagaru after the arrival of the troops from Yudam-ni. Even prior to that event, few Marines had any doubts as to the ability of the Division to fight its way out to the seacoast.

The Hagaru perimeter presented a scene of bustling activity during the first days of December. Trucks and jeeps bounced along the bumpy roads in such numbers as to create a traffic problem. Twin-engined planes roared in and out of the snow-covered airstrip at frequent intervals throughout the daylight hours. Overhead the "Flying Boxcars" spilled a rainbow profusion of red, blue, yellow, green and orange parachutes to drift earthward with heavy loads of rations, gasoline and ammunition.

The busy panorama even had its humorous aspects. Parka-clad

Marines displaying a five-day growth of beard went about with their cheeks bulging from an accumulation of Tootsie Rolls—a caramel confection much esteemed by Stateside youngsters for its long-lasting qualities. The Post Exchange Section had originally brought merchandise into Hagaru on the assumption that it would be established as a base. No space in vehicles was available for its removal and the commanding general directed that the entire remaining stock, \$13,547.80 worth, chiefly candies and cookies, should be issued gratuitously to the troops.¹ Tootsie Rolls proved to be a prime favorite with men who would have scorned them in civilian life. Not only were they more tasty than half-frozen "C" rations, but they resulted in no intestinal disorders. Moreover, they were useful as temporary repairs for leaking radiators.

There was nothing during the daytime to indicate the presence of CCF troops near Hagaru. Even in hours of darkness the enemy was quiet throughout the first five nights of December. Apparently the Chinese were powerless to renew the attack until reinforcements and replenishments of supplies and ammunition reached the area.

4312 Casualties Evacuated by Air

Evacuation of the wounded was the chief problem on 2 December, when it became evident that previous estimates of losses at Yudam-ni and among the Army troops east of the Reservoir were far too low. A total of 914 casualties were flown out by the C-47s and R4Ds that day and more than 700 on the 3d. Captain Hering and his assistants had assumed that the Air Force evacuation officer was screening the casualties until he informed them that this was not his responsibility. The Division surgeon then set a Spartan standard. He passed personally on all controversial cases and approved for evacuation only those in as bad shape as Lieutenant Commander Lessenden, the 5th Marines surgeon who had refused to be flown out and continued on duty after both feet were painfully frozen. Apparently it was not too severe a test for men who could stand the pain, since Lessenden suffered no permanent injuries.²

¹ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex T (Post Exchange), n. p. Smith, *Notes*, 1017-1018.

² Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, U. S. Navy, Public Information Release, 21 Apr 51; LCdr J. H. Craven, (ChC) USN, interv by HistDiv, HQMC, 22 Oct 52; Hering, "Address Before U. S. Association of Military Surgeons, 9 Oct 52."

Captain Hering had to use his medical authority in several instances to overcome the objections of Yudam-ni casualties who declined evacuation, though in obvious need of hospitalization.³

The liaison airstrip at Koto-ri had been of little use, since it was outside the perimeter and exposed to enemy fire. But the completion of a new strip on the 2d made it possible to evacuate about 47 casualties that day from the 2/1 perimeter.⁴

More than 1400 casualties remained at Hagaru on the morning of 5 December. They were all flown out before nightfall, making a total of 4312 men (3150 Marines, 1137 Army personnel and 25 Royal Marines) evacuated from Hagaru by air in the first five days of December, according to Marine figures.⁵ X Corps estimated a total of 4207 for the same period.⁶

R4Ds of the 1st MAW, flying under Wing operational control, were represented in the flights to and from Hagaru as well as the C-47s of the Combat Cargo Command, FEAF.⁷ The large-scale casualty evacuation was completed without losing a man, even though the aircraft landing on the rough strip careened precariously as they bounced along the frozen runway. Only two planes could be accommodated simultaneously at first, but Marine engineers widened the 2900-foot strip until six planes could be parked at a time.

A four-engine Navy R5D made a successful landing with stretchers flown in from Japan. After taking off with a load of wounded, the pilot barely cleared the surrounding hills, and it was decided to risk no further evacuations with such large aircraft. Two crash landings marred operations on the field. An incoming Marine R4D, heavily loaded with artillery ammunition, wiped out its landing gear on the rough surface and was abandoned after its load had been put to good use by the gunners. A second accident involved an Air Force C-47 which lost power on the take off and came down just outside the Marine lines without injury to its load of casualties. Troops from the perimeter were

³ *Ibid.* Study of the frostbite casualties of the Chosin Reservoir campaign led to the adoption of the thermal boot as an effective preventive measure during the operations of the following two winters of the Korean conflict.

⁴ 2/1 SAR, 16; LtCol W. S. Bartley ltr, 7 Feb 56; X Corps, *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 93; Smith, *Notes*, 844; VMO-6 SAR, 13-18.

⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 998-999.

⁶ X Corps *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 93.

⁷ Maj Paul A. Noel, Jr. interv, 4 Dec 56.

rushed out immediately to rescue its occupants but the plane had to be destroyed.⁸

Not until long later were final official casualty reports rendered for the period of the Yudam-ni regroupment and breakout. Regimental figures are not available, and the totals included the losses suffered by the troops at Hagaru during the night of 30 November–1 December. Following are the figures for the 1st Marine Division as a whole throughout this five-day period:

	KIA	DOW	MIA	WIA	Total Battle	Non- Battle ¹
30 Nov.....	27	6	6	183	222	102
1 Dec.....	27	14	6	111	158	134
2 Dec.....	55	2	33	231	321	180
3 Dec.....	16	1	6	194	217	196
4 Dec.....	10	6	4	202	222	582
Totals	135	29	55	921	1140	1194

¹ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex E (Division Adjutant), appendix II, 3.

537 Replacements Flown to Hagaru

At 1359, on 3 December, X Corps issued OI 22, directing the 1st Marine Division to withdraw all elements to Hamhung area via the Hagaru–Hamhung axis as rapidly as evacuation of wounded and other preparations would permit.⁹ General Almond flew to Hagaru that same day for a conference with General Smith. Nothing further was said about destruction of equipment. At that very time, in fact, various critical items were being salvaged and flown out from Hagaru when space on planes was available.

Surplus weapons had accumulated as a result of casualties and the Marine general wished to avoid the destruction of any material that could be removed by air without interfering with casualty evacuation. It was particularly necessary to salvage and fly out the parachutes and packages used for air drops, since a critical shortage of these had been

⁸ *Ibid.*, Smith, *Notes*, 998–999.

⁹ X Corps OI 22, 2 Dec 50.

reported from Japan. Before leaving Hagaru, the Division also planned to evacuate large quantities of stoves, tents, typewriters, rifles, machine guns and damaged 4.2" mortars.¹⁰

Space in empty planes landing at Hagaru was utilized not only for bringing in equipment and medical supplies, but also replacements. Since the Wonsan landing some hundreds of Marines, most of them wounded in the Inchon-Seoul operation, had returned from hospitals in Japan. These men, upon reporting at Hungnam, were temporarily assigned to the Headquarters Battalion, since the Division had no provision in its T/O for a replacement organization. Ordinarily they would have been returned to their units, but enemy action made this procedure impossible until the completion of the airstrip.

During the first five days of December, therefore, 537 replacements were flown to Hagaru, fit for duty and equipped with cold-weather clothing. Those destined for the 1st Marines were assigned to the 3d Battalion for perimeter defense, and personnel for the 5th and 7th Marines joined those units after their arrival at Hagaru.

Major General William H. Tunner, USAF, the chief of the Combat Cargo Command, expressed astonishment during his visit of 5 December on learning about these replacements. He had come to offer his C-47s for troop evacuation after the casualties were flown out, but General Smith explained that all able-bodied men would be needed for the breakout.

Air Drops of Ammunition

Visitors and press correspondents arrived daily at Hagaru in the empty C-47s and R4Ds. Among them was Miss Marguerite Higgins, reporter for the New York *Herald-Tribune*. General Smith ruled that for her own protection, considering the possibility of enemy attack, she must leave the perimeter before nightfall.

French and British publications were represented as well as most of the larger American dailies and wire services. At one of the press conferences the question arose as to the proper name of the Marine operation. A British correspondent had intended to refer to it as a "retreat" or "retirement," but General Smith held that there could be no retreat

¹⁰ This section, except where otherwise noted, is derived from the following sources: G-1 SAR, 6-7 and G-4 SAR 6-7, appendix 3-5; X Corps *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*; Smith, *Notes*, 1011-1015, and *Chronicle*, 103-105; Forney, *Special Report*, 3-5; Maj M. J. Sexton interv by HistDiv, HQMC, 6 May 51.

when there was no rear. Since the Division was surrounded, he maintained, the word "retreat" was not a correct term for the coming breakout to the coast.¹¹

General Smith and Lieutenant Colonel Murray were interviewed for television by Charles de Soria, who also "shot" Marines on infantry duty and casualties awaiting evacuation. These pictures and recordings were later shown in the United States under the title *Gethsemane*.

The correspondents were astonished to find the Hagaru perimeter so lacking in enemy activity. This quiet was shattered at 2010 on 5 December when two B-26s bombed and strafed the area. Marine night fighters were absent on a search mission, but one was recalled to offer protection against further efforts of the sort. A possible explanation was advanced by First Lieutenant Harry S. Wilson, of VMF(N)-542, who reported that he had received orders by radio to attack Hagaru. It was his conviction that Chinese use of captured radio equipment accounted for the B-26 attack.¹²

The interlude of CCF inactivity gave the 1st Marine Division an opportunity to build up a stock of air-dropped ammunition and supplies. Poor communications had prevented the obtaining of advance information as to the requirements of the Yudam-ni troops, and their needs had to be estimated by the assistant G-4.

It was planned that units moving out from Hagaru would take only enough supplies for the advance to Koto-ri. Materiel would be air-dropped there to support the next stage of the breakout.

The C-119s of the Combat Cargo Command were called upon to fly in the largest part of the total of the 372.7 tons requested for air delivery at Hagaru. C-47s and R4Ds were available for some items, particularly of a fragile nature; and specially packaged small drops to meet specific needs could be made by planes of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Officers and men of the Headquarters Battalion at Hagaru were ordered to assist the 1st Regulating Detachment in the operation of the Hagaru airhead. Army service troops were also assigned to the task, and dumps were set up adjacent to the drop zone for the direct issuing of supplies. The major items requested were artillery, mortar and small arms ammunition, hand grenades, gasoline and diesel oil, rations, and communication wire.¹³

¹¹ Smith, *Notes*, 977-978; *Chronicle*, 103-106.

¹² 1stMarDiv G-3 *Journal*, 5-6 Dec 50, entry 7; Maj H. E. Hood, memo: Close Air Support, 11 Feb 51; Wilson interv., 29 Jan 51.

¹³ HqBn *URpt* 13; G-4 *SAR*, appendix II, 2-3; LtCol F. Simpson Comments, 24 Sep 56.

There is no record of the amounts actually received. Pilots sometimes missed the drop zone so far that the containers were "captured" by the enemy or landed in areas where recovery was not feasible because of enemy fire. In other instances, the supplies fell near the positions of front-line units which issued them on the spot without any formalities of bookkeeping.

Breakage rates were high, due to the frozen ground. About 70 per cent of the POL products and 70 to 80 per cent of the rations were recovered in usable condition. Of the artillery ammunition delivered to the drop zone, 40 per cent was badly damaged and only 25 per cent ever reached the gun positions. About 45 per cent of the small arms ammunition was recovered and usable. A hundred per cent of the requested mortar ammunition and 90 per cent of the 81mm rounds were put into the air over the drop zone, though the damage rate was nearly as high as that of the artillery shells.¹⁴

In spite of the seemingly low percentages of receipts as compared to requests, it was considered that the Hagaru air drops had been successful on the whole. "Without the extra ammunition," commented General Smith, "many more of the friendly troops would have been killed. . . . There can be no doubt that the supplies received by this method proved to be the margin necessary to sustain adequately the operations of the division during this period."¹⁵

Planning for Breakout to Koto-ri

The need of the Yudam-ni troops for recuperation was so urgent that 6 December was set as the D-day of the attack from Hagaru to Koto-ri. On the recommendation of his staff, General Smith decided that the need of the troops for rest and regroupment outweighed the advantages of a speedy advance, even though the enemy would be allowed more time to get his forces into position along the MSR.

Another factor influencing this decision was the thinning of the command group and staff sections of the Division. It will be recalled that General Craig, the Assistant Division Commander, had recently been returned on emergency leave to the United States. Colonel Walseth (G-1) was wounded on 30 November, while Lieutenant Colonel Chi-

¹⁴ G-4 SAR, appendix II, 3-5.

¹⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 1010.

dester, had been MIA since that date. Colonel McAlister (G-4) had been directed to remain at Hungnam to co-ordinate logistic functions.

A serious handicap to planning was the shortage of staff personnel. This was due in part to the casualties suffered by the last convoy of Headquarters troops to move up from Hungnam. Moreover, the office force had been depleted by calls for reinforcements to defend the perimeter.

By dint of working round the clock, however, planning for the breakout to Koto-ri was completed on schedule. OpnO 25-50, issued at 0800 on 5 December, provided for an advance of the 1st Marine Division at first light the following morning on the Koto-ri-Chinhung-ni-Majong-dong axis to close the Hamhung area. The principal subordinate units were assigned these tasks:

- (a) RCT-5 (3/1 attached) to relieve all elements on perimeter defense in the Hagaru area by 1200, 5 December; to cover the movement of RCT-7 out of Hagaru to the south; to follow RCT-7 to the south on the Hagaru-ri-Koto-ri-Chinhung-ni axis; to protect the Division rear from Hagaru to Koto-ri; and to follow RCT-7 from Koto-ri to the Hamhung area as Division reserve.
- (b) RCT-7 to advance south at first light on 6 December on the Hagaru-Koto-ri-Chinhung-ni axis to close the Hamhung area.
- (c) RCT-1 (-) to continue to hold Koto-ri and Chanhung-ni, protecting the approach and passage of the remainder of the Division through Koto-ri; and to protect the Division rear from Koto-ri to the Hamhung area.¹⁶

All personnel except drivers, relief drivers, radio operators, casualties and men specially designated by RCT commanders, were to march on foot alongside motor serials to provide close-in security. It was directed that vehicles breaking down should be pushed to the side of the road and destroyed if not operative by the time the column passed. During halts a perimeter defense of motor serials was to be established.

Nine control points were designated by map references to be used for reporting progress of the advance or directing air drops. Demolitions to clear obstacles from the front and to create them to the rear were planned by the Division Engineer Officer.

Division AdminO 20-50, which accompanied OpnO 25-50, prescribed that the troops were to take enough "C" rations for two days, equally distributed between individual and organic transportation. Se-

¹⁶ 1stMarDiv *OpnO 25-50*, 5 Dec 50. Other sources for the remainder of this section are: 1stMarDiv *AdmO 20-50*, 4 Dec 50; 1stMarDiv Destruction Plan, Hagaru Area, 4 Dec 50; Smith, *Chronicle*, 104-106.

lected items of "B" rations were to be loaded on organic vehicles, and the following provision was made for ammunition:

On individual, up to 1 U/F per individual weapon; on vehicle, minimum 1 U/F, then proportionate share per RCT until dumps depleted or transportation capacity exceeded.

Helicopter evacuation was indicated for emergency cases. Other casualties were to be placed in sleeping bags and evacuated in vehicles of the column.

Two Division trains were set up by AdminO 20-50. Lieutenant Colonel Banks commanded Train No. 1, under RCT-7; and No. 2, under RCT-5, was in charge of Lieutenant Colonel Milne. Each motor serial in the trains was to have a commander who maintained radio communication with the train commander.

Truck transportation not being available for all supplies and equipment at Hagaru, a Division destruction plan was issued on 4 December, making unit commanders responsible for disposing of all excess supplies and equipment within their own areas. "Commanding officer 1st Regulating Detachment is responsible for destruction all classes supplies and equipment remaining in dumps," the order continued. "Unit commanders and CO 1st Regulating Detachment report types and amounts of supplies and equipment to this headquarters (G-4) prior to destruction. Permission to use fuel and ammunition for destruction purposes must be obtained from this headquarters (G-4)."

3/1 Relieved by RCT-5 at Hagaru

General Smith held conferences on 4 and 5 December of senior unit commanders. During the afternoon of the 4th General Almond arrived by plane and was briefed on the plan for the breakout. In a brief ceremony at the Division CP he presented the Distinguished Service Cross to General Smith, Colonel Litzenberg and Lieutenant Colonels Murray and Beall.

The night of 5-6 December was the fifth in a row to pass without enemy activity at Hagaru. But if Division G-2 summaries were to be credited, it was the calm before the storm. For the Chinese were believed to be assembling troops and supplies both at Hagaru and along the MSR to Koto-ri. Up to this time seven CCF divisions, the 58th, 59th, 60th, 76th, 79th, 80th and 89th, had been identified through POW

interrogations. But there were evidences that the 77th and 78th were also within striking distance.¹⁷

At 1200 on 5 December the 5th Marines relieved 3/1 of the responsibility for the defense of the Hagaru area. Division elements other than infantry were withdrawn from the front line, leaving Lieutenant Colonel Murray's three battalions, with 3/1 attached, disposed around the perimeter as follows:

- 1/5—From the Yudam-ni road around the north of Hagaru and astride the Changjin Valley to a point at the base of the ridge about 1,000 yards east of the bridge over the Changjin River.
- 2/5—In position on western slopes of East Hill.
- 3/5—From the south nose of East Hill west across the river to link up with 3/1 south of the airstrip.
- 3/1—South and southwest of airstrip in sector formerly held by How and Item Companies of 3/1.¹⁸

Not only were the CCF positions on East Hill a threat to Hagaru; they also dominated the road leading south to Koto-ri. Thus the plan for the breakout called for simultaneous attacks to be launched at first light on the 6th—RCT-5 to regain the enemy-held portion of East Hill, and RCT-7 to lead the advance of the Division motor column toward Koto-ri.

A plan for air support, prepared by the command and staff of the 1st MAW, was brought to Hagaru by Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, Assistant Wing Commander, on 5 December. Aircraft were to be on station at 0700 to furnish close support for the attack on East Hill. Along the MSR to Koto-ri an umbrella of 24 close support aircraft was to cover the head, rear and flanks of the breakout column while search and attack planes scoured the ridges flanking the road and approaches leading into it. Support was also to be furnished after dark by the night hecklers. All strikes within three miles of either side of the MSR were to be controlled by the ground forces while the planes were free to hit any targets beyond.

The concentration of aircraft covering the advance south from Hagaru was one of the greatest of the whole war. Marine planes at Yonpo would, of course, continue approximately 100 daily sorties to which VMF-323 would add 30 more from the *Badoeng Strait*. The Navy's fast carriers, *Leyte*, *Valley Forge*, *Philippine Sea*, and *Princeton* were

¹⁷ Smith, *Notes*, 1025, 1051; CG's Diary in X Corps *Command Report Annex (CR)*, 4 Dec 50.

¹⁸ CG 1stMarDiv msg to Subordinate Units, Hagaru, 2000 4 Dec 50; 5th Mar *SAR*, 30-31.

to abandon temporarily their deep support or interdiction operations and contribute about 100 or more attack sorties daily. The Fifth Air Force was to add more power with additional U. S. and Australian fighter-bombers as well as medium and heavy bomber interdiction beyond the bomb line. To augment the carrier support for the X Corps consolidation and possible redeployment by sea, VMF-212 had departed Yonpo on 4 December and was re-equipping in Itami for return to battle aboard the newly arrived USS *Bataan*. The *Sicily* was also heading for the area to take back aboard the Corsairs of VMF-214 on 7 December.¹⁹

Continuous artillery support, both for RCT-5 and RCT-7, was planned by the 11th Marines. Two batteries of the 3d Battalion and one of the 4th were to move out at the head of the RCT-7 train, the two from 3/11 to occupy initial positions halfway to Koto-ri to support the attack southward to that objective, and the 4/11 battery to take position in Koto-ri and provide general support northward in combination with the battery of 2/11 attached to that perimeter. The remaining batteries of the 3d and 4th Battalions would provide initial support from Hagaru southward until ordered to move out.

The three batteries of 1/11, with D/11 attached, were to support the operations of RCT-5 in a similar manner. Two batteries would move out at the head of the regimental train to positions halfway to Koto-ri, the remaining two would fire to the south in support of withdrawing units and then displace when the first two were in position.²⁰

Throughout the night of 5-6 December, the darkness was stabbed by flashes as the artillery at Hagaru fired concentrations to saturate the area along the Hagaru-Koto-ri axis. In order to prevent cratering of the road the 155's fired VT rounds. A secondary purpose of this bombardment was to expend profitably the surplus of ammunition which could not be brought out.²¹

At daybreak on the 6th the Division Headquarters broke camp. General Smith had decided to fly the command group to Koto-ri in advance

¹⁹ 1stMAW *OpnO* 2-50, 5 Dec 50; 1stMAW, "Summary of Air Support for 6 Dec," 5 Dec 50; 1stMarDiv *SAR*, annex CC (Air Officer), 6-7; CinCPacFlt, *Interim Evaluation Report No. 1*, III, 225-226; MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 5 Oct 56; Maj H. D. Kuokka interv, 13 Dec 56. 1stMAW *HD*, Dec 50. The VMF-214 pilots casually made their transition from shore to carrier base between sorties.

²⁰ 1stMarDiv *SAR*, annex SS (hereafter 11Mar *SAR*), 8. As a consequence of the loss of nine 155mm howitzers during the last night of the Yudam-ni-Hagaru breakout, 4/11 was reorganized into two firing batteries of four howitzers each.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1stMarDiv *POR* 209, 6 Dec 50; LtCol W. McReynolds Comments, 16 Aug 56.

of the troops, so that planning could begin immediately for the breakout from Koto-ri southward. General Barr visited during the morning and was informed that the 7th Infantry Division casualties who had reached Hagaru had been flown out. The remaining 490 able-bodied men (including 385 survivors of Task Force Faith) had been provided with Marine equipment and organized into a provisional battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, USA. This battalion was attached to the 7th Marines and sometimes referred to as 31/7.

Throughout the morning General Smith kept in close touch with the progress of RCT-7 toward Koto-ri. At 1400 a reassuring message was received from Colonel Litzenberg, and the commanding general took off from Hagaru by helicopter. Ten minutes later he and his aide, Captain Martin J. Sexton, landed at Koto-ri. The other members of the command group, following by OY and helicopter, set up in a large tent at Koto-ri and started planning for the next stage.²²

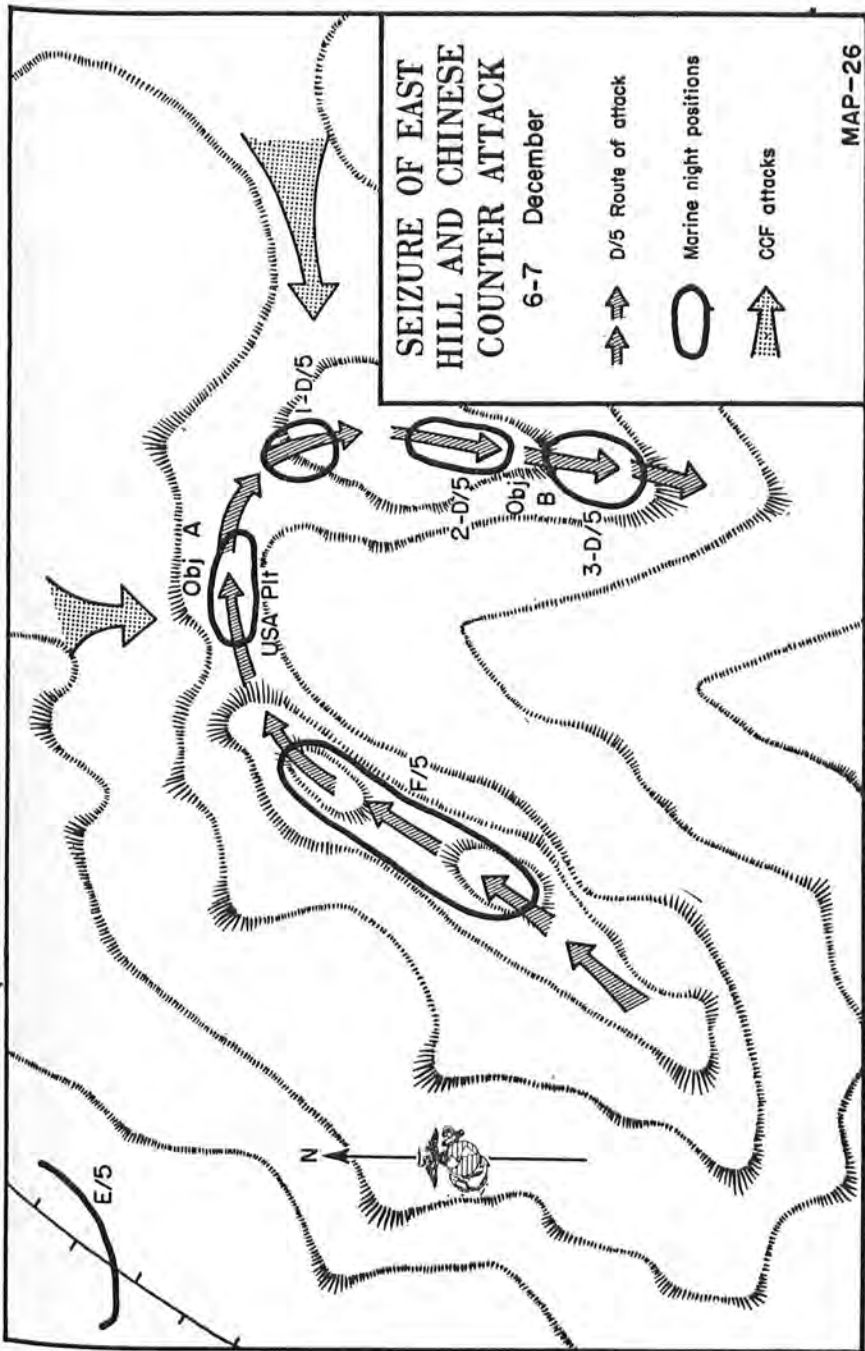
East Hill Retaken from Chinese

Meanwhile, at Hagaru, Lieutenant Colonel Murray had designated his 2d Battalion for the assault on East Hill. At 0700 on 6 December, as the 4.2" mortars began their planned preparation, the 7th Marines had already initiated the breakout to Koto-ri. When Marine planes arrived on station at 0725, a shortage of napalm tanks limited the air attack to bombing, rocket and strafing runs. These had little apparent effect on the objective. Further air strikes were directed by the FAC, First Lieutenant Manning T. Jeter, Jr., who was severely wounded while standing on the crest to direct the Corsairs to the target. Captain David G. Johnson, the air liaison officer, took his place. A total of 76 planes participated in the day's air attacks.

At 0900 Captain Smith's Dog Company moved out to the assault (see Map 26) with First Lieutenant George A. Sorenson's 3d Platoon in the lead, followed by the 2d and 1st Platoons in that order.²³ Attacking to the northward, Sorenson was pinned down by fire from Objective A before he had covered 50 yards. This was the enemy's main forward

²² Smith, *Notes*, 1058-1060; HqBn, *HD*, Dec 50, 5.

²³ This section, except when otherwise noted, is based upon the following sources: 5thMar *SAR*, 31-32; 1/5 *SAR*, 17-18; 2/5 *SAR*, 27-29; Smith, *Notes*, 1031-1033; Geer, *The New Breed*, 353-357; Capt S. Smith, 1stLt J. R. Hines (sic) and 1stLt J. H. Honeycutt, interv by Capt K. A. Shutts, 4 Feb 51; Alvarez ltr, 18 Oct 55. Col R. L. Murray, Comments, n. d.



MAP-26

position on East Hill, which he had held against Marine attacks ever since seizing it in the early morning hours of 29 November. First Lieutenant John R. Hinds replaced Sorensen, after that officer was wounded. While he engaged the enemy frontally, First Lieutenant George C. McNaughton's 2d Platoon poured in flanking fires and First Lieutenant Richard M. Johnson's 1st Platoon executed a flanking movement.

Chinese resistance suddenly collapsed about 1100. Thus it seemed almost an anticlimax that East Hill, after holding out against the Marines more than a week, should have been retaken at a cost of one man killed and three wounded. About 30 CCF dead were found.

As events were to prove, however, this was but the first round in a hard-fought 22-hour battle for the hill mass. The next phase began at 1130, when Roise ordered Captain Peters' Fox Company to relieve Smith so that Dog Company could resume the attack against Objective B, a ridge about 500 yards to the southeast. The lower slopes of this position were now being cleared by 2/7.

After a 10-minute artillery preparation, the three platoons of Dog Company jumped off at 1250. The Chinese put up a stubborn resistance and it took until 1430 to seize the new objective. Marine casualties were moderate, however, and Captain Smith set up three platoon positions along the ridge running to the south whence he could control the road leading out of Hagaru.

Late in the day the enemy appeared to be massing for a counter-attack in the saddle between the two objectives. Johnson called an air strike and all Dog and Fox Company troops within range opened up with everything they had as McNaughton led a patrol against the Chinese in the saddle. Caught between the infantry fires and the rocket and strafing runs of the Corsairs, the CCF survivors surrendered en masse to McNaughton and his platoon. About 220 prisoners were taken to set a record for the 1st Marine Division in the Reservoir campaign.²⁴

At the request of Captain Smith, the saddle between the two Marine companies was occupied by reinforcements consisting of an officer and 11 men from the regimental AT Company and an officer and 32 men from the 4th Signal Battalion, USA. Shortly after dark the enemy launched a vigorous counterattack. Tanks and 81mm mortars fired in support of Marines who made good use of 2.36" white phosphorus rockets at close range.

²⁴ 2/5 SAR, 28-29.

Although the Chinese endured frightful casualties, they returned again and again to the attack until midnight. It was evident that they considered this a fight to a finish for East Hill, and at 0205 they renewed the assault against all three companies of the 2d Battalion as well as Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion.

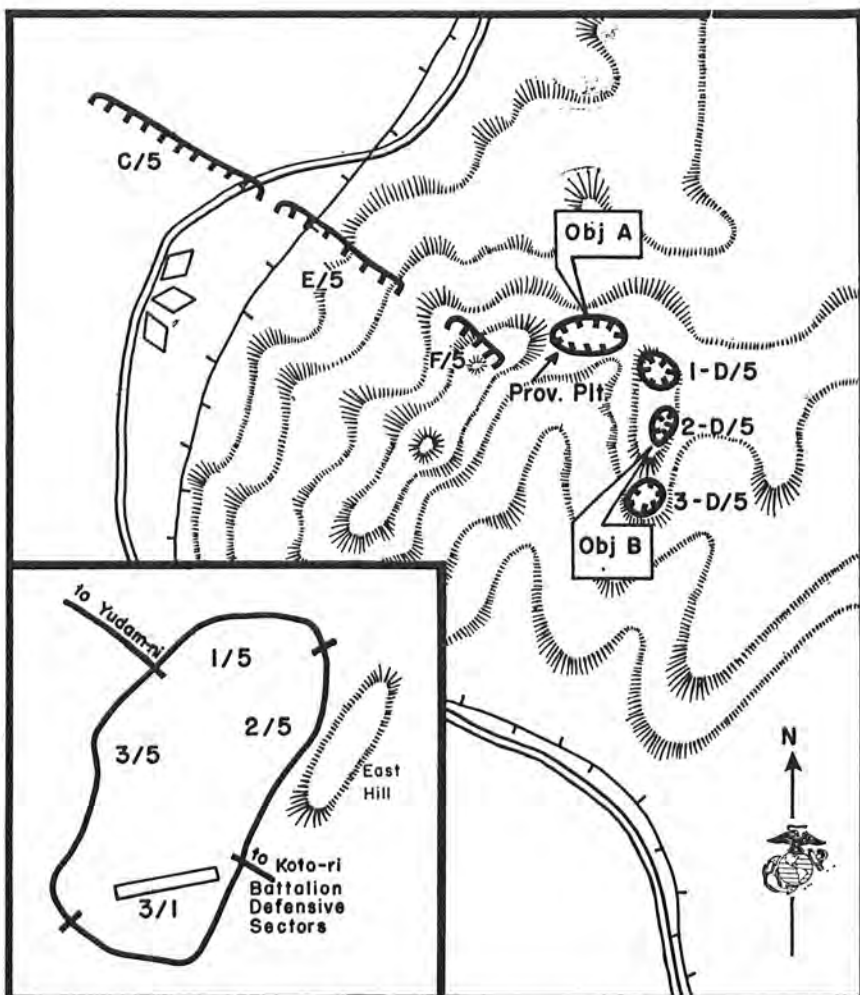
The struggle during the next three hours was considered the most spectacular if not the most fiercely contested battle of the entire Reservoir campaign even by veterans of the Yudam-ni actions. Never before had they seen the Chinese come on in such numbers or return to the attack with such persistence. The darkness was crisscrossed with a fiery pattern of tracer bullets at one moment, and next the uncanny radiance of an illumination shell would reveal Chinese columns shuffling in at a trot, only to go down in heaps as they deployed. Marine tanks, artillery, mortars, rockets and machine guns reaped a deadly harvest, and still the enemy kept on coming with a dogged fatalism which commanded the respect of the Marines. Looking like round little gnomes in their padded cotton uniforms, groups of Chinese contrived at times to approach within grenade-throwing distance before being cut down.

The fight was not entirely one-sided. The Marines took a pounding from CCF mortars and machine guns, and by 0300 Dog Company was hard-pressed in its three extended positions pointed like a pistol at the heart of the enemy's assembly areas. Both McNaughton and the executive officer, First Lieutenant James H. Honeycutt, were wounded but remained in action.

This was the second time in three months that Dog Company had spearheaded a Marine attack on a desperately defended hill complex. Northwest of Seoul in September, only 26 able-bodied men had survived to break the back of North Korean resistance. The company commander, First Lieutenant H. J. Smith, had died a hero's death at the moment of victory, and First Lieutenant Karle F. Seydel was the unit's only unwounded officer.

Now another Smith commanded Dog Company, and Seydel was killed as enemy pressure from front and flank threatened to overwhelm the three riddled platoons. Casualties of 13 KIA and 50 WIA were taken in the battle for East Hill as Dog Company and the provisional platoons fell back fighting to the former Objective A and tied in with Fox Company.

Along the low ground at the northern end of East Hill the Chinese



THE LAST NIGHT AT HAGARU

6-7 DECEMBER 1950

 Marine Positions

 Tanks

 Railroad

 Road



MAP-27

were beaten off with ruinous losses by Jaskilka's Easy Company of 2/5, Jones' Charlie Company of 1/5 and three Army tanks (see Map 27). Enemy troops had to cross a comparatively level expanse which provided a lucrative field of fire for Marine supporting arms. Heaps of CCF dead, many of them charred by white phosphorus bursts, were piled up in front of the Marine positions.

Next, the Chinese hit Captain James B. Heater's Able Company of 1/5, still farther to the left, and overran several squad positions. One platoon was forced to withdraw to the rise on which the Division CP had previously been located. The lines were restored at 0546 with the help of Lieutenant Hancock and his Baker Company, which had been in reserve. Altogether the 1st Battalion had suffered casualties of ten killed and 43 wounded, while the counted CCF slain numbered 260 in front of Charlie Company and 200 in the area of Able Company. George Company of 3/1 also beat off a Chinese attack on the south of the perimeter. With the coming of daylight these Marines found that they had one of the Chinese withdrawal routes under their guns. Mortar and rifle fire annihilated one group of about 60 enemy and another group of 15 Reds surrendered.²⁵

The new day revealed a scene of slaughter which surpassed anything the Marines had seen since the fight for the approaches of Seoul in September. Estimates of CCF dead in front of the 2d Battalion positions on and around East Hill ran as high as 800, and certain it is that the enemy had suffered a major defeat.

When Marine air came on station, the Chinese as usual scattered for cover. About 0200 Murray ordered 3/5, which had not been in contact with the enemy during the night, to displace to the south at the head of Division Train No. 2, followed by 1/5 and Ridge's battalion of the 1st Marines. This meant that Roise's men with a platoon of tanks and the engineers in charge of demolitions would be the last troops out of Hagaru.

Attack of RCT-7 to the South

During the 22-hour battle on East Hill the 7th Marines had been attacking toward Koto-ri (see Map 28). On the eve of the breakout the gaps in the infantry ranks were partially filled with 300 artillerymen from the 11th Marines, bringing Litzenberg's strength up to about 2200

²⁵ Capt G. E. Shepherd, "Attack to the South," (MS), 10-13.

men. 7th Mar OpnO 14-50 called for the advance to be initiated at first light on 6 December as follows:

1st Battalion—to move out at 0430 to clear the ground to the right of the river;

2d Battalion—supported by tanks, to attack as advanced guard along the MSR;

Provisional Battalion (31/7)—to clear the ground to the left of the MSR;²⁶

3d Battalion—to bring up the rear of the regimental train, with George Company disposed along both flanks as security for the vehicles.²⁷

Daybreak revealed a peculiar silvery fog covering the Hagaru area.²⁸ The 1st Battalion, with Charlie Company in assault, had as its first objective the high ground southeast of Tonae-ri. No resistance was encountered, though 24 Chinese were surprised asleep in their positions near the objective and 17 of them killed.

The 2d Platoon of Dog Company, 1st Tank Battalion, was attached to 2/7 when the advance guard jumped off at 0630 from the road block south of Hagaru. Almost immediately the column ran into trouble. Upon clearing the road block the lead dozer-tank took three hits from a 3.5 bazooka. Within twenty minutes the column came under heavy fire from CCF positions on the high ground on the left. Fox Company, in the lead, was allowed to pass before the enemy opened up on the Battalion Command Group, Dog-Easy Company and Weapons Company. The fog prevented air support initially. When it lifted, First Lieutenant John G. Theros, FAC of 2/7, brought in Marine aircraft and 81mm fire on the CCF position.²⁹ It took a coordinated attack by the two infantry companies and the tanks, however, before the resistance could be put down and the advance resumed at 1200. Two and a half hours later the upper reaches of this hill were cleared by D/5.

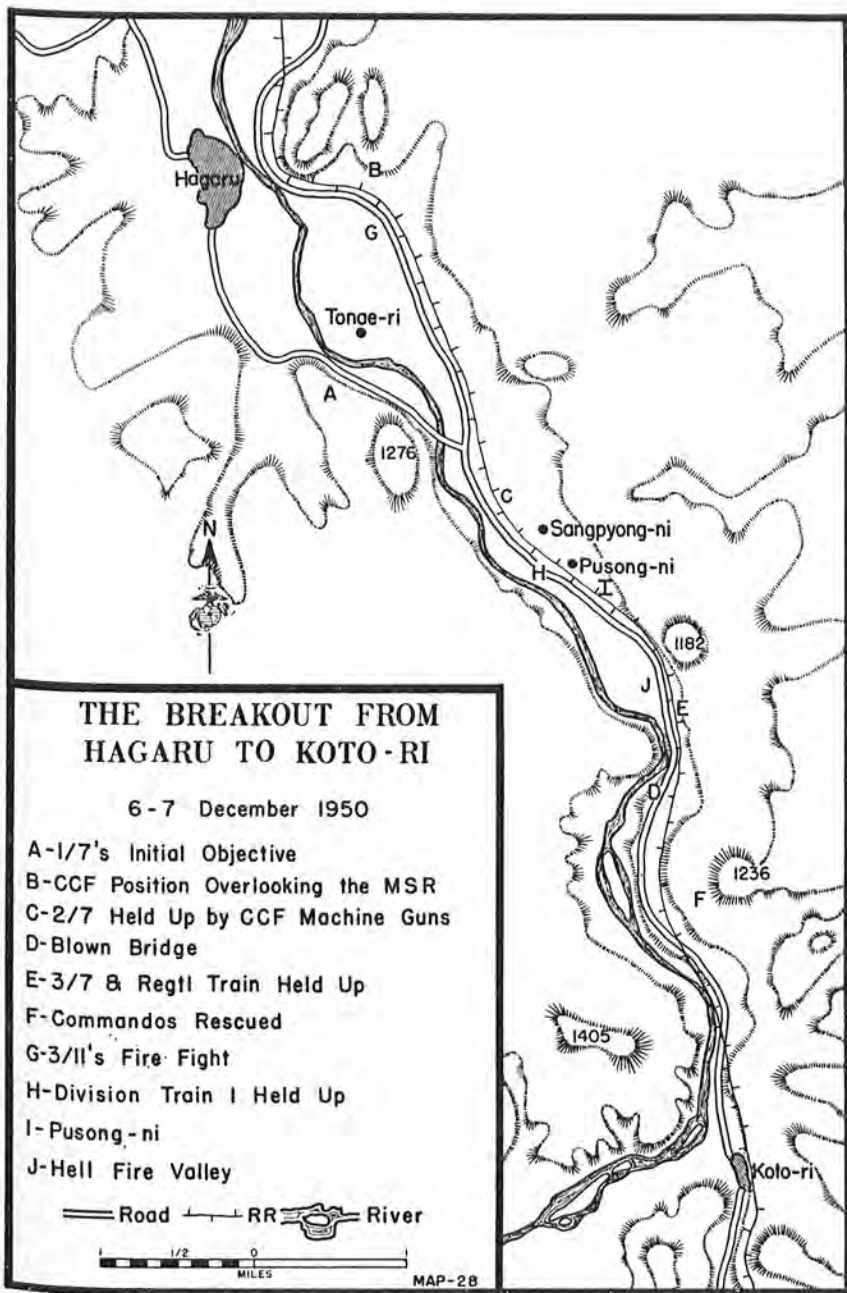
After 2/7 and air smothered the initial Chinese resistance, Fox Company and the platoon of Dog/Tanks advanced down the road. About

²⁶ Since the ground to the left of the MSR was too cut up to permit advance through the high ground, the Provisional Battalion was to operate from the valley and clear enemy from noses found to be occupied. Litzenberg Comments, 5 Oct 56.

²⁷ Sources for this section, except where otherwise noted, are: 7thMar SAR, 24; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; Smith, *Notes*, 1029-1031, 1033-1047; RCT-7 URpt 6; 1stLt J. B. Chandler, "Thank God I'm a Marine," *Leatherneck Magazine*, xxiv, no. 6 (Jun 51), 25-26; MajGen H. L. Litzenberg, *Recollections of the Action from Hagaru to Koto-ri*, 6-7 December 1950, 2 Oct 56, and Comments, 5 Oct 56; Col R. G. Davis Comments, 28 Sep 56; Sawyer Comments, 7 Sep 56; LtCol H. T. Milne Comments, 24 Sep 56; LtCol M. E. Roach Comments, 27 Nov 56.

²⁸ Litzenberg Recollections, 2 Oct 56.

²⁹ 1stLt J. G. Theros, interv by Capt S. W. Higginbotham, 16 Feb 51; Litzenberg Recollections, 2 Oct 56.



4000 yards south of Hagaru they met the next resistance. Although the Chinese positions were in plain sight of 1/7, neither 2/7 nor air could spot them. Colonel Litzenberg and Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood attempted to co-ordinate mortar fires from 2/7 with observation from 1/7, but were unsuccessful because of poor radio communications. Following an erratic artillery barrage and some good shooting by the tanks, Fox Company cleared the enemy position about 1500, aided by a Dog-Easy flanking attack and the Provisional Battalion. In order to assist 2/7, Baker Company of 1/7 came down from the ridge west of the river to act as right flank guard.

Meanwhile 1/7 continued to push ahead methodically to the right of the MSR as the three rifle companies leapfrogged one another. Enemy contact was continual but no serious opposition developed during the daytime hours. On the left flank the Provisional Battalion had several fire fights, while the advance was uneventful for the 3d Battalion following in the rear of the regimental train.

About 5000 yards had been covered by dusk. Enemy resistance stiffened after dark, as had been anticipated. The planners had realized that the movement could have been made in daylight hours with fewer losses in personnel and equipment. But intelligence of the expected arrival of CCF reinforcements influenced the decision to continue the march throughout the night even at the cost of increased opposition. By noon long lines of Chinese could be seen along the sky line to the east of the road moving towards the MSR. Air attacked these reinforcements but could not stop their movement, as later events proved.

About 8000 yards south of Hagaru, in Hell Fire Valley, a Chinese machine gun on the left stopped the 2d Battalion at 2200. The column was held up until midnight before Army tank fire knocked out the enemy gun. After covering 1200 more yards a blown bridge caused another halt while Dog Company engineers made repairs. Movement was resumed at 0200 when a second blown bridge resulted in a delay of an hour and a half before it could be bypassed.

Dawn brought a significant innovation in air support. Circling above the 11-mile column inching toward Koto-ri was an airborne Tactical Air Direction Center (TADC) installed in an R5D of VMR-152 and operated by Major Harlen E. Hood and his communicators from MTACS-2. Major Christian C. Lee, Commanding Officer of MTACS-2, had made arrangements when he realized that with his radios packed in trucks and jeeps he could not control close air support effectively.

Only the addition of one radio to those standard in the aircraft was necessary to provide basic communications, but when being readied for the predawn takeoff the mission faced failure because an engine wouldn't start. Minus a refueler truck, the crew chief, Technical Sergeant H. C. Stuart, had worked all night to pour 2400 gallons of gas into the craft by hand. Now, in the bitter cold of dawn, he set about to overhaul the starting motor. Two hours later Major John N. Swartley was piloting the plane over the MSR.⁸⁰

No trouble was encountered by 2/7 along the last few miles of the route and the battalion was first to arrive at Koto-ri. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion had been assigned the additional mission of replacing the Provisional Battalion as protection for the left flank as well as rear of the 7th Marines train. A brief fire fight developed at about 2100 as the Chinese closed to hand-grenade range. Lieutenant Colonel Harris deployed George and Item Companies around the vehicles and drove the enemy back to a respectful distance. Between 0200 and 0430, Item Company of 3/7 and a platoon of tanks were sent back up the road to clear out a troublesome Chinese position near Hell Fire Valley.

About 0200, during a halt for bridge repairs, the 7th Marines train was hit by enemy fire. The regimental command group suffered most. Captain Donald R. France and First Lieutenant Clarence E. McGuinness were killed and Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Dowsett was wounded. While Lieutenant (jg) Robert G. Medemeyer, (MC), USN, gave first aid, Chaplain (Lieutenant (jg)) Cornelius J. Griffin entered an ambulance to console a dying Marine. CCF machine gun bullets shattered his jaw and killed Sergeant Matthew Caruso at his side. Lieutenant Colonel Harris and Major Roach supervised the deployment of How Company troops to beat off the attack.

About 0530 Lieutenant Colonel Harris disappeared. A search was made for him to no avail and he was listed as a MIA. It was later determined that he had been killed.

The 1st Battalion of RCT-7, after a relatively uneventful march over the high ground west of the river, moved down the slope to join the regimental column. Major Warren Morris assumed command of the 3d Battalion, which reached Koto-ri about 0700. At about 1100, after a brief rest, the men were ordered together with Lockwood's troops to move back up along the MSR to the north and set up blocking between

⁸⁰ 1stMAW SAR, Annex I (VMR-152), 11-12, and annex K, appendix J, (hereafter MTACS-2SAR), 25; Air Officer's Rpt, in X Corps CR, 6 Dec 50; LtCol J. N. Swartley ltr to authors, 15 Oct 56.

Koto-ri and Hill 1182 to keep the road open for other units of the Division.³¹ While carrying out this mission, the 2d Battalion helped to bring in 22 British Marines who had been stranded ever since the Task Force Drysdale fight on the night of 29–30 November. Their plight was not known until 4 December, when an OY pilot saw the letters H-E-L-P stamped out in the snow and air-dropped food and medical supplies.

Advance of the Division Trains

By 1700 on 7 December all elements of RCT-7 were in the perimeter at Koto-ri. Division Train No. 1 was due next, and the planners had hoped that the rifle battalions would clear the way for the vehicles. At it proved, however, the Chinese closed in behind RCT-7 and attacked the flanks of the convoy, with the result that the service troops actually saw more action than the infantrymen.

One of the causes may be traced to the fact that Division Train No. 1 had to wait at Hagaru until 1600 on the 6th before RCT-7 made enough progress toward Koto-ri to warrant putting the convoy on the road. About 2000 yards south of Hagaru elements of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, were hit in the early darkness by CCF mortar and small-arms fire. The gunners of George and How Batteries deployed as infantrymen and repulsed the enemy at the cost of a few casualties.

Upon resuming the march, a second fire fight took place after 1500 more yards had been covered. Several vehicles, set afire by Chinese mortar shells, blocked the road and brought the convoy to a halt. At daybreak the enemy swarmed to the attack in formidable numbers. It was nip and tuck as all pieces of How Battery and three howitzers of George Battery were emplaced between the trucks of the 1st MT Battalion.

There was no opportunity to dig in the trails of guns employing time fire with fuses cut for ranges of 40 to 500 yards. But the Chinese were stopped cold by two hours of continuous fire after approaching within 40 yards. All but about 50 of an estimated 500 to 800 enemy were killed or wounded before the remainder fled, according to the estimate of the gunners.³²

³¹ 1stMarDiv msg to 7thMar, 1030 7 Dec 50; CO RCT 7 FragO, 0930 7 Dec 50.

³² Unless otherwise noted the description of the movement of the division trains is based on: HqBn, *HD*, Dec 50, 6–9; HqBn, *URpt* 13; Maj F. Simpson interv by Capt K. A. Shutts, 11 Apr 51.

The convoy of the Division Headquarters Company also had to fight its way. Small arms ammunition had been distributed throughout the column, and light machine guns were mounted on top of truck loads. All able-bodied men with the exception of drivers and radio operators walked in single file on either side of the vehicles carrying the wounded.

Progress was slow, with many halts caused by CCF fire. At 0130 several trucks were set aflame by enemy mortar shells and 2.36 rockets. Headquarters troops deployed in roadside ditches while two machine guns manned by bandsmen kept the Chinese at a distance. At 0200 the clouds cleared enough to permit strikes by night hecklers of VMF (N)-513. They stopped the Chinese until just before daylight, when a company-size group penetrated within 30 yards of the convoy. During this fight First Lieutenant Charles H. Sullivan, who measured six feet four and weighed 240 pounds, emptied his carbine at advancing Chinese. Then he hurled it like a javelin to drive the bayonet into the chest of an opponent at 15 feet.

Under the coaching of the MTACS commander, Major Lee, two more night fighters—Major Albert L. Clark and First Lieutenant Truman Clark—pinned the Chinese down with strafing runs as close as 30 yards from the Marine ground troops. At dawn Major Percy F. Avant, Jr., and his four-plane division from VMF-312 dumped about four tons of explosives and napalm on Chinese who broke and ran for cover. The fire fight had cost Headquarters Battalion 6 KIA and 14 WIA.³³

The MP Company, just forward of Headquarters Company, had the problem of guarding about 160 Chinese prisoners. Captives unable to walk had been left behind at Hagaru, where Lieutenant Colonel Murray directed that the wounded be given shelter and provided with food and fuel by the departing Marines. The prisoners escorted by the MPs were lying in the middle of the road during the attack when the enemy seemed to concentrate his fire on them while shouting in Chinese. A scene of pandemonium ensued as some of the able-bodied prisoners attempted to make a break. Now the Marines as well as the enemy fired into them and 137 were killed in the wild melee.

When the convoy got under way again, two Communists were captured and 15 killed after being flushed out of houses in the village of Pusong-ni. At daybreak a halt was called in Hell Fire Valley for the

³³ This description of the headquarters convoy fight is based on: *Ibid.*; Cpl G. L. Coon, "Versatility," *Leatherneck Magazine*, xxiv, no. 3 (Mar 51), 18-19; Simpson Comments, 24 Sept 56; MTACS-2 SAR, 19; Maj C. C. Lee interv by Capt S. W. Higginbotham, 7 Feb 51, Comments, 14 Aug 56, and ltr 1 Nov 56.

purpose of identifying bodies of MPs and Headquarters troops, killed in the Task Force Drysdale battle, which were to be picked up later. Attempts to start the looted and abandoned vehicles met with no success and the convoy continued the movement to Koto-ri without incident, arriving about 1000 on the 7th.

At this hour the last Marine troops had not yet left Hagaru, so that the column as a whole extended the entire 11 miles of the route. Division Train No. 2 had formed up during the afternoon of the 6th, but was unable to start until after dark. At midnight the train had moved only a short distance out of Hagaru. Lieutenant Colonel Milne requested infantry support and 3/5 was given the mission of advancing at the head of the column, along with the 5th Marines regimental train, to eliminate enemy resistance.³⁴ Taplett had only two companies, one of which proceeded astride the road while the other echeloned to the left rear. The late start proved to be a blessing, since Division Train No. 2 completed most of its movement by daylight under an umbrella of Marine air and met only light and scattered resistance. The head of the column reached Koto-ri at 1700, and at 2300 all of the major Division units were in the perimeter except 2/5, the rear guard.³⁵

Both 1/5 and 3/1 had formed up in Hagaru on the morning of the 7th and moved out as rapidly as traffic would permit, which was slow indeed. They were accompanied by the 41st Commando, which had earned the esteem of all U.S. Marines by valor in combat. British imperturbability was at its best when Lieutenant Colonel Drysdale held an inspection shortly before departing Hagaru. Disdainful of the scattered shots which were still being heard, the officers moved up and down the rigid lines, and men whose gear was not in the best possible shape were reprimanded.

By 1000 nobody was left in the battered town except Roise's battalion, First Lieutenant Vaughan R. Stuart's tank platoon and elements of Able Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, commanded by Captain William R. Gould. This unit and CWO Willie S. Harrison's Explosive Ordnance Section of Headquarters Company engineers were attached to the 5th Marines for the mission of the demolitions at Hagaru.³⁶

³⁴ Col J. L. Stewart Comments, n. d.

³⁵ The description of the operations of the 5th Marines and 3/1 are based on: 3/5 SAR, 17; 3/1, SAR, 26 Nov-15 Dec 50, 7; 5th Mar SAR, 32-34; 1/5 SAR, 18-19; 2/5 SAR, 29-30, 37.

³⁶ Descriptions of the operations of the engineers at Hagaru are based on these sources: 1st Engr Bn SAR, 13; Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 50; Narrative of Capt N. A. Canzona, 13 Jul 56.

Gould had formed five demolitions teams, each composed of an officer and four to six men. On the evening of 6 December they began preparations for burning stockpiles of surplus clothing and equipment along with the buildings of the Hagaru train yard. There was also the duty of placing charges in the dumps of mortar and artillery ammunition which could not be transported to Hagaru.

One of the main problems was the disposal of a small mountain of frozen surplus rations. A team of engineers spent hours on the 6th at the task of smashing cans and crates of food with a bulldozer and saturating the dump with fuel oil.

The Able Company engineers came under the operational control of the 2d Battalion after the other units of the 5th Marines departed. Demolitions were to await the order of Lieutenant Colonel Roise on the morning of the 7th. Hagaru was full of combustibles, however, and fires of mysterious origin sent up dense clouds of smoke before the engineers touched off the oil-soaked food supplies and the buildings of the train yard.

As the Marines of 2/5 pulled back toward the southern tip of East Hill, smoke blotted out the surrounding area so that enemy movements could not be detected. Worse yet, premature explosions sent up fountains of debris just as the engineers were setting up their fuses for a 20-minute delay. Detonations shook the earth on all sides. Rockets sliced through the air, shells shattered into vicious fragments, and large chunks of real estate rained down everywhere. Roise was understandably furious, since his troops were endangered during their withdrawal. By a miracle they came off East Hill without any casualties, and the engineers were the last Marines left in Hagaru. Soon the entire base seemed to be erupting like a volcano. Visibility was reduced to zero when the engineers pulled out, after setting a last tremendous charge to blow the bridge.

So compelling was the lure of loot that small groups of Chinese came down from the high ground toward the man-made hell of flame and explosions. Between clouds of smoke they could be seen picking over the debris, and the Marine tanks cranked off a few rounds at targets of opportunity.

It is not likely that any of Roise's weary troops paused for a last sentimental look over their shoulders at the dying Korean town. Hagaru was not exactly a pleasure resort, and yet hundreds of Marines and soldiers owed their lives to the fact that this forward base had enabled

the Division to evacuate all casualties and fly in replacements while regrouping for the breakout to the seacoast.

If it had not been for the forethought of the Division and Wing commanders, with the concurrence of General Almond, there would have been no R4D airstrip, no stockpiles of ammunition, rations and medical supplies. And though the Marines might conceivably have fought their way out of the CCF encirclement without a Hagaru, it would have been at the cost of abandoning much equipment and suffering much higher casualties.

Only a few weeks before, this Korean town had been merely an unknown dot on the map. But on 7 December 1950 the name was familiar to newspaper readers and radio listeners all over the United States as they anxiously awaited tidings of the breakout. Already it had become a name to be remembered in U. S. Marine annals along with such historical landmarks as Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Peleliu and Iwo Jima.

Prospects of a warm meal and a night's sleep meant more than history to Roise's troops when the column moved out at last shortly after noon, with the engineers bringing up the rear to blow bridges along the route. A pitiful horde of Korean refugees followed the troops—thousands of men, women and children with such personal belongings as they could carry. Efforts on the part of the engineers to warn the refugees of impending demolitions were futile. Although these North Koreans had enjoyed for five years the "blessings" of Communist government, the prospect of being left behind to the tender mercies of the Chinese Communists was so terrifying that they took appalling risks. Knowing that a bridge was about to blow up at any instant, they swarmed across in a blind panic of flight. Never did war seem more harsh or its victims more pathetic.³⁷

The rear guard had less air and artillery support than any of the preceding troops, yet CCF opposition was confined to scattered small-arms fire all the way to Hell Fire Valley. There the enemy lobbed over a few mortar shells during a long halt at dusk, but the rest of the advance was uneventful. Gould's engineers took chances repeatedly of being cut off when they fell behind to burn abandoned vehicles or blow bridges. On several occasions a small group found itself entirely isolated as the infantry and even the refugees pushed on ahead. Luckily the engineers made it without any casualties, and by midnight the last troops of the 1st Marine Division had entered the perimeter at Koto-ri.

³⁷ Sexton interv, 16 May 51.

Thus the first stage of the Division breakout came to a close. In proportion to total numbers, the service troops of Division Train No. 1 had taken the heaviest losses—six killed and 12 wounded for the Division Headquarters Company; one killed and 16 wounded for the Military Police Company; four killed and 28 wounded for the 1st Motor Transport Battalion; one killed and 27 wounded for the 1st Ordnance Battalion; and three killed and 34 wounded for the 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines. Battle casualties for the entire 1st Marine Division, including those of the East Hill battle, were as follows:

Dates	KIA	DOW	MIA	WIA	Totals
6 Dec.....	32	4	7	218	261
7 Dec.....	51	16	0	288	355
Totals	83	20	7	506	616 ¹

¹ Div Adjutant SAR, Appendix II, 3.

About 38 hours were required for the movement of some 10,000 troops and more than 1,000 vehicles. The new arrivals filled the perimeter at Koto-ri to the bursting point, but there was to be no pause at this point. Division OpnO 26-50, issued at 1815 on the 7th, before the last troops had arrived, provided for the advance to be resumed from Koto-ri at first light the following morning.

CHAPTER XIV

Onward from Koto-ri

Assembly of Division at Koto-ri—Activation of Task Force Dog—Air Drop of Bridge Sections—Division Planning for Attack—Battle of 1/1 in the Snowstorm—Advance of RCT-7 and RCT-5—Marine Operations of 9 and 10 December—Completion of Division Breakout

THE PROGRESS OF the 1st Marine Division breakout depended in no small degree on the reliable communications provided by the division radio relay linking up Hagaru, Koto-ri, Chinhung-ni, and Hungnam. At 1440 on 6 December the vehicles of the Hagaru relay terminal joined Division Train No. 1, whereupon the station at Koto-ri became in turn the terminal.¹

This station was located on the highest point of ground just south of the Koto-ri perimeter. And though it was outside the defense area, the Chinese did not bother it until the Marines were breaking camp. Then the opposition consisted only of harassing small-arms fires instead of the attack which might have been expected.²

In fact, the enemy did not launch another large-scale assault on Koto-ri after his costly repulse on the night of 28-29 November. Although the perimeter was surrounded throughout the first six days of December, incipient CCF attacks were broken up in the enemy's assembly areas. Excellent observation as well as casualty evacuation was provided by the OYs taking off from the Koto-ri airstrip. They were the eyes of an impressive array of Marine fire power—tanks, 4.2-inch, and 81mm mortars as well as aircraft and Captain McClelland's Easy Battery of 2/11.

¹ Smith, *Notes*, 1056.

² Col A. Sutter interv, 8 Aug 56; Bartley ltr, 7 Feb 56.

"The artillery 105's and the mortars did a grand job," commented Major Bartley. "They were always available, shifted their fires quickly and accurately, and serviced their pieces amazingly well in the cold weather."³

As a further asset, the Koto-ri perimeter was defended by adequate numbers in comparison to Hagaru during the first critical week of CCF attacks. On 30 November, when Baker Company of the 1st Tank Battalion returned to Koto-ri after the Task Force Drysdale battle, three platoons of tanks were added to the Dog Company platoon already attached to 2/1. The next day Colonel Puller's RCT-1 (-) was further strengthened by the arrival of the 2d Battalion of the 31st Infantry, 7th Infantry Division, the last unit to reach Koto-ri from the south. These Army troops had been ordered to Hagaru, but owing to the changing situation they were directed by X Corps on 1 December to remain at Koto-ri. Under the operational control of Colonel Puller, 2/31 took over a sector at the southern end of the perimeter.

Sporadic CCF small-arms fire was received on each of the first six days of December, and enemy troop movements were observed at all points of the compass. On several occasions a few mortar shells were lobbed into the perimeter. Not a single Marine casualty was suffered during the period,⁴ though CCF losses were estimated at 646 killed and 322 wounded.

Daily air drops were required to keep the perimeter supplied with ammunition, rations, and other essentials. Captain Norman Vining, the Battalion FAC, who had once been a carrier landing signal officer, guided planes to satisfactory drop zones with makeshift paddles. One day a case of .30 caliber cartridges broke free from its chute and hurtled through the top of Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's tent during a conference. Narrowly missing several officers, it hit the straw at their feet and bounced high into the air before landing on a crate used as a table.

Assembly of Division at Koto-ri

Koto-ri being second only to Hagaru as an advance base, Colonel Puller at times had responsibilities which are usually shouldered by an ADC.

³ Bartley ltr, 7 Feb 56. This section is also based on 1stMar SAR, 18-24, and the 2/1 SAR, 15-18.

⁴ Not so fortunate was 2/31, which lost 5 KIA and 10 WIA expanding the perimeter to the south on 3 Dec. CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1850 3 Dec 50.

On 29 November he had been the organizer of Task Force Drysdale, and on 6 December it became his task to make ready for the reception of the 10,000 troops from Hagaru.

Although the Koto-ri perimeter was already overcrowded, Puller directed that hot food and warming tents be provided for all Hagaru troops upon arrival. More than 14,000 men would then be organized for the next stage of the breakout. Strength estimates were as follows:⁵

Marine garrison at Koto-ri	2,640
U. S. Army units at Koto-ri	1,535
Royal Marine Commandos at Koto-ri	25
Marines arriving from Hagaru	9,046
U. S. Army troops arriving from Hagaru	818
Royal Marine Commandos arriving from Hagaru	125
ROK police attached to RCT-5	40

14,229

Puller dealt with the problem of casualty evacuation at Koto-ri by ordering that the OY strip be lengthened so that larger aircraft could land. The engineers of Charlie Company started the job on 6 December, and progress speeded up as the Dog Company engineers arrived next day from Hagaru with their heavy equipment.

The strip had been widened by 40 feet and extended by 300 on 7 December when the first TBM landed. These planes had been borrowed from the Navy and 1stMAW administrative flight lines and assigned to VMO-6. They could fly out several litter patients and as many as nine ambulatory cases. Captain Alfred F. McCaleb, Jr., of VMO-6 and First Lieutenant Truman Clark of VMF(N)-513, evacuated a total of 103 casualties. The carrier landing training of the Marines stood them in good stead as Captain Malcolm G. Moncrief, Jr., a qualified landing signal officer of VMF-312, directed the TBMs to their landings at Koto-ri with paddles.⁶

The clearing station established at Koto-ri by Company D of the 1st Medical Battalion (Lieutenant Commander Gustave T. Anderson (MC), USN had a normal bed capacity of only 60 but somehow continued to handle a total of 832 cases, including non-battle casualties. The Company D medics were assisted during their last few days at Koto-ri by Captain Hering, the Division surgeon, and Commander

⁵ Smith, notes, 1069-1071.

⁶ "Carrier Deck," *Leatherneck Magazine*, xxxiv, no. 3 (Mar 51), 19-20; 1stMar SAR, 23; 2/1 SAR, 17-18; 1stEngrBn SAR, 13; 1stMedBn SAR, 12; and VMO-6 SAR, 17-18; 1stMAW SAR, 7; BrigGen E. C. Dyer Comments, n. d.

Howard A. Johnson (MC), USN, the CO of the 1st Medical Battalion. Captain Richard S. Silvis (MC), USN, surgeon of the 2d Marine Division, on temporary duty in Korea as an observer, also took an active part.⁷

Surgical assistance was welcomed by the Company D medics, since operations at Koto-ri were performed under the most difficult conditions. Only tents being available for patients, the hundreds of casualties brought from Hagaru added to the necessity for speedy evacuation. About 200 cases were flown out on the 7th by TBMs and liaison aircraft. By the following morning the engineers had lengthened the OY strip to 1750 feet, but a heavy snowfall put an end to nearly all air activity. In spite of the risks involved, one Air Force C-47 did get through to Koto-ri, where it could be heard but not seen while circling blindly about the perimeter. By a miracle the plane landed safely and took off with 19 casualties. The following day saw air evacuation of casualties in full swing, with about 225 being flown out to clear the hospital tents of all serious cases.⁸

Activation of Task Force Dog

A large tent in the middle of the perimeter served both as office and sleeping quarters for General Smith and his staff. Planning was immediately resumed after they arrived at Koto-ri on the afternoon of 6 December. Before leaving Hagaru it had been recognized that the enemy might be saving his main effort for the mountainous ten-mile stretch from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni. In such terrain a mere CCF platoon could do a great deal of mischief, and the planners agreed that it would be necessary for 1/1 to attack northward from Chinhung-ni and clear the road. This meant that the battalion must be relieved by an Army unit, and a request was made verbally to General Almond.⁹

X Corps had received orders on 1 December for the 3d Infantry Division to assemble in the Wonsan area prepared for further operations, possibly to join the Eighth Army in west Korea. Although General Almond initiated execution of the order immediately, he sent the highest ranking Marine officer on his staff, Colonel Forney, and the Corps G-2, Lieutenant Colonel William W. Quinn, to Tokyo to explain the impli-

⁷ 1stMedBn SAR, 3-7.

⁸ *Ibid.* See also Smith, *Notes*, 995-998, 1110-1112.

⁹ Smith, *Notes*, 1063-1064.

cations of the withdrawal of this Army division from northeast Korea. Following a conference with General Hickey, GHQ Chief of Staff, the Division was released back to X Corps on the 3d, and General Almond ordered it to return to the Hamhung area to protect this vital port area and to assist the breakout of the 1st Marine Division by relieving 1/1 at Chinhung-ni.¹⁰

At 2115 on 6 December the 1st Marine Division requested by dispatch that the relief be completed the next day in order to free 1/1 for the attack to the north. The relief column, designated Task Force Dog and commanded by Brigadier General Armistead D. Mead, ADC of the 3d Infantry Division, consisted of the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, plus detachments of engineers, signalmen, and antiaircraft troops. Brushing aside some Chinese roadblocks, it arrived at Chinhung-ni on the afternoon of the 7th and relieved 1/1 immediately.¹¹

Air Drop of Bridge Sections

Another problem which the 1st Marine Division planners had faced at Hagaru called for an engineering solution. As early as 4 December the commanding general was notified that a critical bridge three and a half miles south of Koto-ri (see Map 29) had been blown by the enemy for the third time. At this point water from the Chosin Reservoir was discharged from a tunnel into four penstocks, or large steel pipes, which descended sharply down the mountainside to the turbines of the power plant in the valley below. Where the pipes crossed the road, they were covered on the uphill side by a concrete gatehouse, without a floor. On the downhill side was the one-way bridge over the penstocks which the enemy had thrice destroyed. Between the cliff and the sheer drop down the mountainside there was no possibility of a bypass. Thus the gap of 16 feet (24 feet, counting the abutments) must be spanned if the Division was to bring out its vehicles, tanks and guns.¹²

Following the destruction of the original concrete bridge, the enemy

¹⁰ X Corps *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 17-18; Forney, *Special Report*, 3.

¹¹ Smith, *Notes*, 1063-1064; X Corps *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 20-24; X Corps *OI 26*, 5 Dec 50; and Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, 90; CG 1stMarDiv msg to CG X Corps, 2115 6 Dec 50; CG X Corps msg X 13811, 7 Dec 50; Col D. M. Schmuck Comments, n. d.

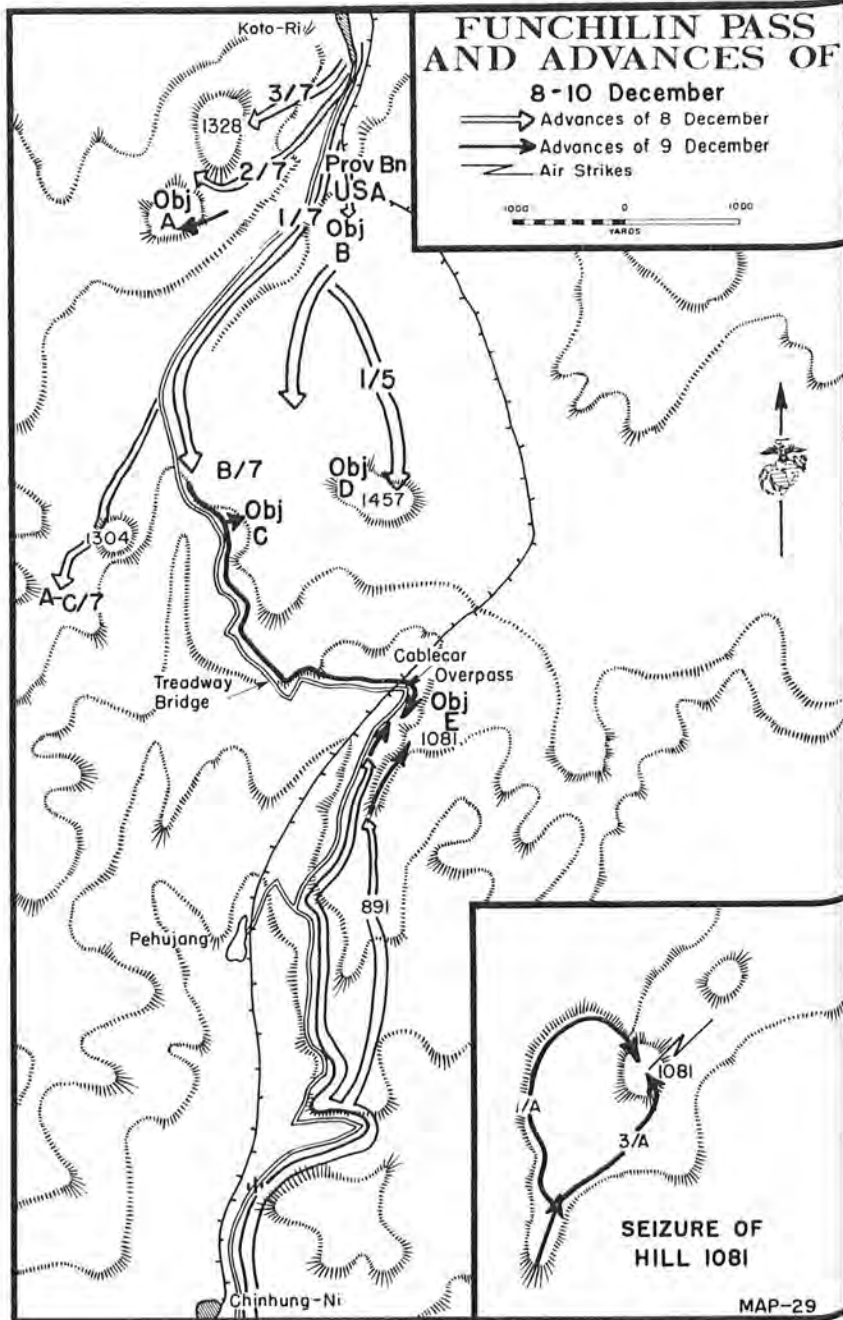
¹² Except when otherwise specified, this section is based on the following sources: Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 48-63; Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 15 Jul 51, 72-73; Smith, *Notes*, 1057-1059, 1075, 1095-1109; 1stEngBn *SAR*, 3-14; Geer, *The New Breed*, 361-362, 369; LtCol J. H. Partridge Comments, n. d.

FUNCHILIN PASS AND ADVANCES OF

8-10 December

- Advances of 8 December
- Advances of 9 December
- ⚡ Air Strikes

1000 0 1000
METERS



MAP-29

had blown a temporary wooden structure and an M-2 steel treadway span installed by Army engineers. No prefabricated bridging was available at Hagaru, and time did not permit the construction of a timber trestle bridge. The possibility of Bailey bridge sections was considered but rejected for technical reasons. Finally, after a detailed study of the break from the air on 6 December, Lieutenant Colonel Partridge estimated that four sections of an M-2 steel treadway bridge would be required. Prospects did not appear bright when a bridge section was badly damaged on the 6th after being test-dropped at Yonpo by an Air Force C-119. Nevertheless, it was decided to go ahead the next day with the drop at Koto-ri.¹³

There were four U. S. Army treadway bridge (Brockway) trucks at Koto-ri, two of which were operative. After conferring with First Lieutenant George A. Babe of the 1st Engineer Battalion and Colonel Hugh D. McGaw of the 185th Engineer (C) Battalion, USA, Partridge decided to request a drop of eight sections in order to have a 100% margin of safety in case of damage.

After analyzing the causes of the unsuccessful test drop, Captain Blasingame of the Air Delivery Platoon had larger parachutes flown to Yonpo from Japan, accompanied by Captain Cecil W. Hospelhorn, USA, and a special crew of Army parachute riggers. Blasingame and a hundred-man work detail from the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion worked all night at Yonpo to make ready for the drop next day by eight C-119s of the Air Force.

At 0930 on 7 December three of the 2500-pound bridge sections were dropped inside the Koto-ri perimeter and recovered by the Brockway trucks. The remaining five sections were delivered by noon, one of them falling into the hands of the Chinese and one being damaged.

Plywood center sections were also dropped so that the bridge could accommodate any type of Marine wheel or tracked vehicle. Thus the tanks could cross on the metal spans only, while the trucks could manage with one wheel on the metal span and the other on the plywood center.¹⁴

All the necessary equipment having been assembled at Koto-ri by the late afternoon of the 7th, the next problem was to transport it three and a half miles to the bridge site. Colonel Bowser, the Division G-3,

¹³ Smith, *Notes*, 1057-1059, 1075, 1095-1097; Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 48-53; 1stEngBn SAR, 13-14.

¹⁴ Partridge interv 25 Jun 51, 48-53; Capt C. W. Hospelhorn, "Aerial Supply in Korea," *Combat Forces Journal*, I, no. 10 (May 51), 29-30.

directed the engineers to coordinate their movements with the progress made by RCT-7 the following morning. Lieutenant Colonel Partridge attended a briefing conducted by Colonel Litzenberg on the eve of the assault, and it was agreed that the trucks with the bridge section would accompany the regimental train. First Lieutenant Ewald D. Vom Orde's First Platoon of Company D engineers was designated as the escort. First Lieutenant Charles C. Ward's engineers led the 7th Marines trains. Both platoons were assigned the task of installing the bridge sections.

Division Planning for Attack

On the assumption that the gap over the penstocks would be successfully spanned, the 1st Marine Division issued OpnO 26-50 at 1850 on 7 December. Although the last operation order had specified the Hamhung area as the objective, it was found necessary at Koto-ri to give more explicit instructions for the advance to the southward.

The plan was simple. Recognizing the sharp cleft of Funchilin Pass as the most difficult defile of the entire breakout, General Smith ordered the seizure of the heights overlooking the pass from the north end of Hill 1081, dominating the road through the pass. In its details the plan shaped up as follows:

(1) RCT-7 (reinforced with the Provisional Army battalion) to attack south from Koto-ri at 0800 on 8 December and seize Objectives A and B—the first being the southern extension of Hill 1328, about 2500 yards southwest of Koto-ri, and the other the second nose due south of Koto-ri.

(2) RCT-5 to attack and seize Objective D (Hill 1457, two and a half miles south of Koto-ri) while RCT-7 continued its attack and seized Objective C (a nose dominating the MSR two and three-fourths miles south of Koto-ri).

(3) At 0800, as RCT-7 jumped off at Koto-ri, the 1st Battalion of RCT-1 was to attack from Chinhung-ni and seize Objective E (Hill 1081, three miles to the north).

(4) RCT-1 (less the 1st Battalion but reinforced by 2/31) was to protect Koto-ri until the Division and regimental trains cleared, whereupon it was to relieve RCTs 5 and 7 on Objectives A, B, C and D.

(5) Upon relief by RCT-1, RCTs 5 and 7 were to proceed south along the MSR to the Hamhung area.

(6) RCT-1 was to follow RCT-5 and protect the Division rear.¹⁵

¹⁵ 1stMarDiv OpnO 26-50, 7 Dec 50. The task organization remained as it was during the move from Hagaru to Koto-ri. For the regimental orders, see 1stMar OpnO 16-50, 7 Dec 50; 5thMar OpnO 44-50, 7 Dec 50; and 7thMar Frag O, 7 Dec 50. Other sources for this section are: 11thMar SAR, 9; and Smith, *Notes*, 1062.

Artillery plans provided for one battery of 2/11 and one of 3/11 to answer the calls of RCT-7 for supporting fires. The other batteries of 3/11 were to move south with the motor column while two batteries of 1/11 supported RCT-5. The remaining battery of 3/11 was attached to 2/11 with a mission of moving south to Chinhung-ni and taking a position from which to support the withdrawal of RCT-1 as rear-guard. Easy Battery of 2/11, left behind at Koto-ri, was laid to fire to the north and west, while Fox Battery of 2/11 and the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion at Chinhung-ni supported the attack of 1/1 on Hill 1081.

The plan of the 1stMAW for air support was essentially the same as the one which proved so effective during the advance from Hagaru to Koto-ri.

An object lesson of that movement had been the personnel and equipment losses suffered by the Division trains as a consequence of a late start. The planners were determined not to repeat this mistake. As a further precautionary measure, General Smith directed that the tanks form the last elements of the motor column.¹⁰ Thus in the event of a breakdown on the twisting, single-lane road, it would not be necessary to abandon all the vehicles behind a crippled tank.

As for the enemy situation, G-2 summaries indicated that early in December the CCF 26th Corps, consisting of the 76th, 77th and 78th Divisions, reinforced by the 94th Division of the 32d Corps, had moved down from the north and taken positions on the east side of the MSR between Hagaru and Koto-ri. There they relieved the 60th Division, which moved into the area south of Koto-ri. The 76th and 77th Divisions occupied positions along the MSR in the Koto-ri area, while the 78th and 94th Divisions were apparently held in reserve. Elements of the 89th Division, operating from the mountainous area southwest of Koto-ri, conducted harassing operations against the MSR in the vicinity of Chinhung-ni as well as Koto-ri.

The 60th CCF Division held prepared positions on the high ground south of Koto-ri commanding Funchilin Pass and the MSR leading to Chinhung-ni. That these positions included Hill 1081, the dominating terrain feature, was revealed by prisoners taken in the vicinity by patrols of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, prior to 8 December.

¹⁰ CG 1stMarDiv msg to COs 1st, 5th, 7th Mars, 1stTkBn, 1100 8 Dec 50.

Battle of 1/1 in the Snowstorm

Division plans had not called for the swirling snowstorm which reduced visibility to 50 feet and precluded air support at first light on 8 December. In spite of weather conditions, the assault battalions of RCT-7 moved out from Koto-ri on schedule after 1/1 attacked northward from Chinhung-ni.

The planners had realized that the success of the movement to Chinhung-ni would depend to a large extent on the seizure of Objective E—Hill 1081. On 2 December Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck had led a reconnaissance patrol into Funchilin Pass as far north as this position. Sighting large numbers of Chinese on both sides of the road, he called for artillery fires with good effect. This reconnaissance did much to establish Hill 1081 as the key terrain feature.

Although 1/1 had patrolled aggressively, the battalion had engaged in no large-scale actions so far in the Reservoir campaign. The men were fresh, well-rested and spoiling for a fight when they moved out at 0200 on 8 December from an assembly area south of Chinhung-ni after being relieved by Task Force Dog.

Schmuck's battle plan provided for the three companies to advance in column along the MSR in the pre-dawn darkness. Since orders were to attack at 0800, a start at 0200 was considered necessary in order to make the six-mile approach march.

Captain Wray's Charlie Company, in the lead, was to take Objective 1, the southwestern nose of Hill 1081, and hold it while the other two companies passed through to carry out their missions. Captain Barrow's Able Company was to attack east of the MSR and fight its way to the summit of Hill 1081; and Captain Noren's Baker Company to advance to the left flank, along the slopes between Barrow and the MSR.¹⁷

The combination of snow and darkness reduced visibility almost to zero as 1/1 set out along the slippery MSR five hours before daybreak. All heavy equipment had been sent to the rear from Chinhung-ni, and the only vehicles were two ambulances and a radio jeep.

In the snow-muffled silence of the night the men took on protective

¹⁷ This section, except when otherwise noted, is derived from the following sources: *Ibid.*; 1stMar SAR, 19-20, 24-26; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 13; Bates interv, 16 Mar 53, 108-112; Geer, *The New Breed*, 364-368; Col D. M. Schmuck, LtCol D. W. Bridges, LtCol W. L. Bates interv, 8 Aug 56; special mention should also be made of the two-part article, "Last Barrier," by S. L. A. Marshall in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxvii, no. 1 (Jan 53), 20-23, and no. 2 (Feb 53), 40-46; LtCol D. W. Bridges interv, 14 Dec 56.

coloring as feathery flakes clung to their parkas. Objective 1 was seized shortly after dawn, following a difficult approach march against negligible resistance. The battalion commander prepared for the next phase by bringing up 81mm mortars and an attached platoon of 4.2s and emplacing those weapons in Wray's position. He also directed that the five attached Army self-propelled quad-.50 caliber and twin 40mm guns of B Company 50th AAA (AW) Bn be moved to a little rise off to the left of the road in the vicinity of the village of Pehujang. From this position they covered the MSR as far as the bridge over the penstocks.

At 1000 the main attack was set in motion. Baker Company advanced along the wooded western slope of Hill 1081 as Barrow attacked up the hogback ridge leading to the summit. The snowstorm fought on the side of the Marines by hiding their movements from the Chinese occupying the high ground east of the MSR around the great horseshoe bend where the road passed under the cable car line.

Noren's men saw hundreds of enemy footprints but met only scattered opposition until they came to the first CCF roadblock on their left flank. There they were stopped by two machine guns, but a Marine patrol worked around on the uphill side and routed the Communists with a machine gun and 60mm mortar attack.

In the absence of air and artillery support, the 4.2s and 81mm mortars emplaced in the Charlie Company position were called upon whenever visibility permitted. Surprise was Noren's best resource, however, when Baker Company came up against the CCF bunker complex on the western slope of Hill 1081. The enemy had so little warning that the Marines found a kettle of rice cooking in the largest bunker, an elaborate log and sandbag structure which had evidently been a CCF command post. The entire complex was taken after a brief but savage fight in which all defenders were killed or routed. Schmuck set up his CP in a captured bunker, where he and his officers soon discovered that several regiments of Chinese lice had not yet surrendered.

Only enough daylight was left for the sending out of patrols, whereupon Noren secured for the night. His losses amounted to three killed and six wounded.

Barrow's men had no physical contact with Baker Company while clawing their way upward along an icy ridge line too narrow for deployment. A sudden break in the snow afforded the Able Company commander a glimpse of a CCF stronghold on a knob between him and

his objective, the topographical crest of Hill 1081. The drifting flakes cut off the view before he could direct mortar fire, but Barrow decided to attack without this support and rely upon surprise. Advancing in column along the steep and narrow approach, he sent Lieutenant Jones with two squads of the 2d Platoon to execute a wide enveloping movement on the left. Lieutenant McClelland's 1st Platoon had a similar mission on the right. Barrow himself led Staff Sergeant William Roach's 3d Platoon in a front attack.

It took more than an hour for the two flanking forces to get into position. Not until they had worked well around the Chinese bunker complex did Barrow give the signal for attack. Perhaps because silence had been enforced during the stealthy advance, the assault troops yelled like Indians as they closed in on the foe. Out of the snowstorm Barrow's men "erupted with maximum violence," and the enemy was too stunned to put up much of a fight. The only effective resistance came from a single CCF machine gun which caused most of the Marine casualties before Corporal Joseph Leeds and his fire team knocked it out, killing nine Communists in the process.

More than 60 enemy bodies were counted after the Marines cleaned out the bunkers and shot down fleeing Chinese. Barrow's losses were 10 men killed and 11 wounded.

By this time it was apparent that the Chinese had held an integrated system of bunkers and strong points extending to the summit of Hill 1081. The battalion had been strictly on its own all day, all contact with the infantry of Task Force Dog having ended with the relief. When communications permitted, however, 1/1 could count on the excellent direct support of the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, USA, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Leon F. Lavoie. The Army cannoners had set up near Fox Battery of 2/11, using the fire control data of this Marine artillery unit.

The night was clear, promising air and artillery support in the morning, as Able Company consolidated in the captured CCF positions. Although the battalion aid station was only 700 yards away, the terrain was so difficult that litter bearers took several hours to struggle down with the Marine wounded. About midnight the Chinese interrupted with an attack in estimated platoon strength, but Barrow's men drove them off with CCF losses of 18 killed.

The rest of the night passed quietly, and Baker Company had no disturbance on the high ground overlooking the MSR.

Advance of RCT-7 and RCT-5

While these events were taking place, the attack to the south from Koto-ri also fell short of the day's objectives. Colonel Litzenberg's plan called for two of his four battalions (the fourth being the Provisional Battalion of Army troops) to clear the high ground on either side of the road so that a third battalion could advance astride the MSR, followed by the reserve battalion and regimental train.

Major Morris, commanding 3/7, had been assigned the task of attacking on the right at 0800 and seizing Objective A, the southernmost of the cluster of hills known collectively as Hill 1328. He made such slow progress against CCF and small-arms fire that at 1100 Colonel Litzenberg suggested the commitments of 3/7's reserve company. "All three companies," replied Morris, "are up there—fifty men from George, fifty men from How, thirty men from Item. That's it!"¹⁸

Early in the afternoon of 8 December, Litzenberg committed his reserve, 2/7, to assist 3/7. Lockwood's battalion was on the road south of 3/7 and attacked west in an attempt to get in the rear of the enemy holding up 3/7. Easy and Fox Companies attacked abreast and by 1800 the two battalions had joined on the northeastern slopes of the objective. In view of the approaching darkness, however, the attack was postponed until morning, and the troops consolidated for the night short of the objective, which was seized the following morning.

Litzenberg's plan for the seizure of the heights overlooking the northern entrance to Funchilin Pass provided for the Army Provisional Battalion to take Objective B. The soldiers jumped off at 0800, on the left of the MSR, supported by two tanks of the 5th Marines AT Company. By 0900 the battalion had secured its objective without meeting any resistance. Litzenberg then ordered a further advance of 800 yards to the northwestern tip of Hill 1457. At 1330 the Army troops secured their second objective, still without resistance and tied in with 1/5 for the night.¹⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Davis having become regimental executive officer after Dowsett was wounded, Major Sawyer took over command of 1/7. His plan called for the battalion to advance about 2000 yards down the road and wait for 3/7 to come up on his right flank. Then the two battalions would move along together.

¹⁸ Litzenberg interv, 27-30 Apr and 10 Jul 51, 68-69.

¹⁹ FSCC tel to G-3, X Corps, 1245 8 Dec 50 in G-3 Journal; X Corps CR, 8 Dec 50; RCT-7 URpt 6; 7thMar SAR, 25; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; MajGen H. L. Litzenberg Comments, 17 Nov 56; LtCol W. Morris Comments, 15 Oct 56.

The 1st Battalion jumped off at 0800 and reached its phase line without opposition. First Lieutenant Bobbie B. Bradley's platoon advanced down the road to gain contact with the Chinese while the remainder of the battalion halted. When 2/7 began its attack in support of 3/7, Sawyer's battalion moved out. Bradley's patrol having run into opposition from the northern reaches of Hill 1304, Companies A and C moved west of the MSR in a double envelopment of the enemy position. Company B continued the advance towards Objective C, meeting a heavy cross fire from Chinese to their front and on Hill 1304. Lieutenant Kurcaba was killed and Lieutenants Chew Een Lee and Joseph R. Owen wounded. First Lieutenant William W. Taylor took command and managed to clear the enemy from his front just before dusk.

Able and Charlie Companies faced less resistance in overrunning the foxholes and two bunkers on Hill 1304. With dusk falling, Sawyer did not attempt a further advance. Able and Charlie Companies dug in on Hill 1304 while Baker set up a perimeter slightly short of Objective C. The first serials of the truck convoy had moved closely on the heels of 1/7 and had to be backed up to a level area near Objective A. There they formed a perimeter reinforced with H&S and Weapons Companies of 1/7.²⁰

Division OpnO 26-50 had directed Lieutenant Colonel Murray's RCT-5 to await orders before attacking Objective D. It was nearly noon on the 8th before the 1st Battalion, in assault, was directed to move out from Koto-ri.

Lieutenant Colonel Stevens followed the MSR for a mile, then sent two companies out to the left to occupy the objective, Hill 1457. Baker Company seized the intervening high ground and set up to cover the attack of Charlie Company up the slopes of the ridge leading to the objective. Charlie Company fell in with a patrol from the Army Provisional Battalion attached to the RCT-7, and the two combined forces to drive the enemy off the high ground about 1550. A weak Chinese counterattack was easily repulsed, and at 1700 as darkness fell Baker and Charlie Companies tied in with the Army troops while Able Company formed its own perimeter overlooking the MSR. In reserve, the 41st Commando moved into the high ground behind 1/5 to guard against infiltration.²¹

²⁰ 7thMar SAR, 25; RCT-7 URpt 6; CO 1/7 msg to CO 7thMar, 1341 8 Dec 50; Geet, *The New Breed*, 362-363. LtCol W. D. Sawyer Comments, 26 Oct 56.

²¹ 1/5 SAR, 19; S-3 5thMar tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, 1800 8 Dec 50; Maj Stewart tel to CO 5thMar, 1940 8 Dec 50; 5thMar SAR, 34; Smith, *Notes*, 1072.

The day's story would not be complete without reference to the Treadway bridge train, which moved out about 1400 on the 8th in the trace of 1/7. Instructions were to install the sections at the first opportunity, but the site had not been secured as darkness approached. A few Chinese mortar rounds falling in the vicinity of the vulnerable Brockway trucks influenced a decision to return them closer to Koto-ri.²²

Summing up the attacks of 8 December, weather and terrain had done more than the enemy to prevent all assault units of the 1st Marine Division from securing their assigned objectives. Casualties had not been heavy, however, and for the most part the troops were in a position for a renewal of their efforts in the morning.

As for the Koto-ri perimeter, the 8th had passed with only scattered small-arms fire being received by the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines, in Division reserve. All day the Dog Company roadblock, on the route to Hagaru, was like a dam holding back the human torrent of Korean refugees. From this throng rose a low-pitched wail of misery as homeless men, women, and children huddled without shelter in the snowstorm of the 8th. It was a distressing spectacle to the Marines in the perimeter, yet the refugees could not be admitted because of the probability that Chinese soldiers had infiltrated among them, watching for an opportunity to use hidden weapons. There was little the Marines could offer by way of succor except medical care in some instances. Two women gave birth during the bitterly cold night of the 8th with the assistance of Navy medics. In the morning the crowd of refugees, swollen by new arrivals, waited with the patience of the humble to follow the Marine rear guard to the seacoast.²³

White is the color of mourning in Korea, and snowflakes drifted down gently over the common grave in which 117 Marines, soldiers, and Royal Marine Commandos were buried on the 8th at Koto-ri. Lack of time had prevented the digging of individual graves in the frozen soil.²⁴ Although the necessity of conducting a mass burial was regretted, all available space in planes and vehicles was needed for the evacuation of casualties.

²² G-3 1stMarDiv tel to CO 1stEngBn, 1325 8 Dec 50; G-3 1stMarDiv tel to G-3 X Corps, 1450 8 Dec 50, in G-3 Journal, X Corps CR, 8 Dec 50; D/Engrs SAR, 10.

²³ 2/1 SAR, 18-19.

²⁴ Smith, *Notes*, 1112-1113; Smith, *Chronicle*, 110. According to the terms of the Armistice of 27 July 1953, the remains were delivered to the Americans after the cease-fire.

Marine Operations of 9 and 10 December

New snow sparkled in the sunlight as the day of 9 December dawned bright, clear, and cold. A brief reconnaissance convinced Captain Noren that in the early darkness of the previous evening he had stopped one ridge short of his objective—the northwest slopes of Hill 1081, covering the approach to the cable underpass. Baker Company of 1/1 moved forward without CCF interference to the position.

Captain Barrow had his men test-fire their weapons before mounting the final assault on the dominating knob of the hill. This proved to be a wise precaution, since many of the mechanisms had frozen. After thawing them out, Able Company attacked in column with the 1st Platoon in the lead. Although the assault troops had the benefit of excellent air, artillery, and mortar support, they came under intense small-arms fire from Communists occupying camouflaged log and sandbag bunkers. McClelland's men were hard hit but his left flank squad worked its way forward in brief rushes to positions within 200 yards of Objective E, the topographical crest of Hill 1081. At this point Staff Sergeant Ernest J. Umbaugh organized a squad grenade attack which wiped out the first CCF bunker.

A stretch of about 175 yards, swept bare in places by the icy wind, now lay between the Marines and the final knob. Barrow perceived that this deadly CCF field of fire could be skirted by troops working their way around a shelf jutting from the military crest. Under cover of fire from his 60mm mortars and a strike by four Corsairs, he brought up his 2d and 3d platoons. While McClelland profited by the cover of scrub trees to come up behind the objective, Jones built up a base of fire to cover the direct assault of Roach's platoon as it stormed up the crest. McClelland had to contend with the enemy's last-ditch stand in two log bunkers which the 1st platoon knocked out by tossing grenades through the embrasures. The Communists resisted to the last gasp, but at 1500 the Marines were in undisputed possession of Hill 1081.

Sergeant Umbaugh paid with his life at the moment of victory, and Barrow had only 111 able-bodied men left of the 223 he had led out from Chinghung-ni. But the Marines had won the decisive battle of the advance from Koto-ri; they held the key height dominating Funchilin Pass, though 530 counted enemy dead testified to the desperation of the CCF defense.

Able Company had the most spectacular part, but the victory owed to

the united efforts of all three rifle companies and supporting arms. While Barrow held the crest of the hill, Noren pushed farther along the cable car track, meeting stubborn resistance from scattered enemy groups.²⁵

The collapse of CCF resistance on Hill 1081 had a beneficial effect on the Marine advance from Koto-ri. RCT-7 continued its attack on the morning of the 9th with effective air and artillery support. Lieutenant Hovatter's Able Company of 1/7 seized the remainder of Hill 1304 while Lieutenant Taylor's Baker Company moved south to Objective C. The Army Provisional Battalion occupied the high ground between Objectives C and D.

These movements were carried out against ineffectual enemy resistance or none at all. Whenever a few Communists dared to raise their heads along the MSR, the airborne TADC in the R5D had the communications equipment to control aircraft on station and to direct their employment in response to ground force units.

The 1st Battalion of RCT-5 maintained its positions on Objective D (Hill 1457) all day. At Koto-ri the other two battalions and regimental headquarters made preparations to move out the following day.

As a preliminary to the withdrawal of RCT-1 (-) from Koto-ri, the 3d Battalion was relieved in its positions along the perimeter by the 41st Commando. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge's men then moved out to relieve 3/7 on Objective A and occupy Objective B. The 2d Battalion of RCT-7 (less a company with the regimental train) outposted the MSR between Objectives A and C at about 1630.²⁶

Captain Morris' Charlie Company and a platoon of Baker Company, 1/7, moved down the MSR and secured the bridge site after a short fight. While Charlie Company outposted the area, the Baker platoon crossed behind the broken bridge and suddenly found about 50 Chinese in foxholes. "They were so badly frozen," reported Sawyer, "that the men simply lifted them from the holes and sat them on the road where Marines from Charlie Company took them over."²⁷ Late in the afternoon a patrol from 1/7 attempted to make contact with 1/1 by moving down the MSR. Chinese fire forced the men off the road and

²⁵ 1stMar SAR, 24-26; Bates interv, 16Mar53, 108-112; Schmuck-Bridges-Bates interv, 8 Aug 56; Marshall, "Last Barrier, II," 40-46; Schmuck Comments.

²⁶ 7thMar SAR, 26; RCT-7 URpt 6; 3/7 SAR, n. p.; 1stMar SAR, 25; 3/1 SAR, 8; 5thMar SAR, 35; 1/5 SAR, 19; Smith, Notes, 1077; Sawyer Comments, 25 Oct 56.

²⁷ Sawyer Comments, 25 Oct 56.

they scrambled across the defile below the overpass and into 1/1's lines.²⁸

Lieutenant Colonel Partridge arrived with Weapons Company, 1/7, and the bridge sections followed in the Brockway truck. Even the enemy lent a hand when Communist prisoners were put to work as laborers. After the abutments were constructed, a Brockway truck laid the treadways and plywood panels in position so that both trucks and tanks could cross.

At about 1530, three hours after the start, the bridge was in place. Partridge drove his jeep to the top of the pass to inform Lieutenant Colonel Banks, Commanding Division Train No. 1, that he could begin the descent.

Sawyer's troops had not been idle that afternoon and a total of about 60 CCF prisoners were taken during attacks to drive the enemy back from the bridge site. At about 1700 Partridge returned, and an hour later the first elements of the Division trains began to cross. Only a few vehicles had reached the other side when a disastrous accident threatened to undo everything that had been accomplished. A tractor towing an earth-moving pan broke through the plywood center panel, rendering it useless. And with the treadways spaced as they were, the way was closed to wheeled vehicles.

A first ray of hope glimmered when an expert tractor driver, Technical Sergeant Wilfred H. Prosser, managed to back the machine off the wrecked bridge. Then Partridge did some mental calculations and came up with the answer that a total width of 136 inches would result if the treadways were placed as far apart as possible. This would allow a very slight margin at both extremes—two inches to spare for the M-26s on the treadways; and barely half an inch for the jeeps using the 45-inch interval between the metal lips on the inboard edges of the treadways.

Thanks to skillful handling of the bulldozers the treadways were soon respaced. And in the early darkness Partridge's solution paid off when the first jeep crossed, its tires scraping both edges. Thus the convoy got under way again as an engineer detachment guided vehicles across with flashlights while Sawyer's troops kept the enemy at a distance.²⁹

Advance reports of the bridge drop had brought press representatives flocking to Koto-ri in casualty evacuation planes. David Duncan, of

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Schmuck Comments.

²⁹ Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 56-65.

Life, a former Marine, took realistic photographs of the troops which attracted nation-wide attention. Keyes Beech sent out daily reports while making notes for a book about his adventures in Korea. Miss Marguerite Higgins, who refused to be outdone by male colleagues, was twice requested to leave Koto-ri before nightfall by Marine officers who respected her pluck as a reporter but felt that the perimeter was no place for a woman in the event of an enemy attack.

Hundreds of words were written about the bridge drop. Some of these accounts were so dramatized as to give Stateside newspaper readers the impression that the span had been parachuted to earth in one piece, settling down neatly over the abutments. Headlines reported the progress of the 1st Marine Division every day, and front-page maps made every American household familiar with the names of such obscure Korean mountain hamlets at Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni.

General Shepherd and Colonel Frederick P. Henderson flew up to the perimeter on the 9th for a conference with General Smith. Before their departure they were informed that all remaining casualties at Koto-ri would be evacuated that day.³⁰

All night long on 9-10 December an endless stream of troops and vehicles poured across the span that was doubtless the world's most famous bridge for the moment. "The sensation throughout that night," recalled Lieutenant Colonel Partridge in retrospect, "was extremely eerie. There seemed to be a glow over everything. There was no illumination and yet you seemed to see quite well; there was artillery fire, and the sound of many artillery pieces being discharged; there was the crunching of the many feet and many vehicles on the crisp snow. There were many North Korean refugees on one side of the column and Marines walking on the other side. Every once in a while, there would be a baby wailing. There were cattle on the road. Everything added to the general sensation of relief, or expected relief, and was about as eerie as anything I've ever experienced in my life."³¹

Advancing jerkily by stops and starts, the column met no serious opposition from Chinese who appeared to be numbed by cold and defeat. Prisoners taken that night brought the total up to more than a hundred during the movement from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni. Some of them were suffering from gangrene, the result of neglected frozen limbs, and others showed the effects of prolonged malnutrition. These captives

³⁰ Smith, *Notes*, 1114; *Chronicle*, 111-112.

³¹ Partridge interv, 25 Jun 51, 66.

testified that CCF losses from both battle and non-battle casualties had been crippling.

At 0245 on the morning of the 10th the leading elements of the 1st Battalion, RCT-7, began to arrive at Chinhung-ni. A traffic regulating post had been set up at that point the day before by Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, Division Deputy Chief of Staff, for the purpose of controlling the movement of Marine units to the south.³²

The remaining elements of RCT-7 were strung out from Objective C to the cableway crossing of the MSR. Traffic moved without a hitch until 0400, when two trucks bogged down in a U-shaped bypass across a partially frozen stream about 2000 yards beyond the treadway bridge. Major Frederick Simpson, commanding the 1st Divisional Train, had the vehicles pushed off to one side while the engineers built up the road. After a delay of three hours the column got under way again, with the first vehicles reaching Chinhung-ni at 0830. Ultimately both Division trains got through without a fight, thanks to avoiding the delays which had caused so much trouble during the advance from Hagaru to Kotori.³³

Following the trains, the 7th Marines moved through the Pass. Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood's 2/7 (less Company E, guarding the regimental train) led the way for the regimental command group, the Provisional Army Battalion, 3/7 and the 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines.³⁴

During the early morning hours of the 10th George Company of 3/1 beat off an attack on Objective A by an enemy force estimated at 350 men. This was the only noteworthy instance of CCF activity otherwise limited to scattered shots, and it was believed that the Communists were side-slipping southward, parallel with the MSR. Confirmation of that assumption came at 1200, when Able Company of 1/1 sighted Chinese marching in platoon and company columns through the valley only about 1000 yards east of Hill 1081. Almost simultaneously other dense CCF columns crossed the field of fire of the attached Army self-propelled AAA guns while pouring around an adjacent slope. Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck called immediately for air strikes and artillery fires. Able Company hit the enemy with 4.2" and 81mm mortar rounds, and the Army teams cut loose with .50 cal. and 40mm bursts. The slaughter

³² Smith, Notes, 1077; Narrative of Col E. W. Snedeker [Apr 51].

³³ HqBn *HD Dec* 50, 9; 1stMTBn *SAR*, 13; Simpson interv, 11 Apr 51; LtCol F. Simpson Comments, 22 Oct 56.

³⁴ 7thMar *SAR*, 26; 3/11 *SAR*, 9.

continued for an hour as the Chinese kept on moving southward with that fatalism which never failed to astonish the Marines.

Baker Company of 1/1 launched an assault with close air support at 1300 on a CCF strong point adjacent to the railroad and north of the battalion's positions overlooking the MSR. Noren's men found 3.5" rocket launchers their most effective weapon when clearing the Communists from heavily timbered and sandbagged bunkers. Excellent close air support was received, though two Marine KIA casualties resulted from an error by Navy planes.³⁵

All day the seemingly endless column of vehicles and troops wound southward along the twisting mountain road. At 1030 General Smith and key members of his staff displaced from Koto-ri and proceeded by C-47 and helicopter to the rear CP of the Division at Hungnam. By 1800 both Division trains, all elements of RCT-7 and the 1st, 3d, and 4th Battalions of the 11th Marines had closed Chinhung-ni. There the infantrymen entrucked for Hungnam.³⁶

The 5th Marines column followed the 7th, with 3/5 leading the way and 2/5 close behind. Just south of Objective A a brief fire fight was necessary to silence a CCF machine gun, whereupon the movement continued without further incident until the two battalions reached Chinhung-ni at dusk. The 1st Battalion was not relieved by 2/1 until 1800 and did not close Chinhung-ni until the early morning hours of the 11th.³⁷

The withdrawal of RCT-1(-) and attached units from Koto-ri commenced on the afternoon of the 10th. The 3d Battalion, it will be recalled, had relieved RCT-7 units the day before on Objectives A, B and C, and the 1st Battalion occupied Objective E. The regimental plan called for 1/1 to hold the Hill 1081 area and protect the MSR until the other units of the regiment passed through, whereupon Schmuck's battalion was to pull out with the tanks at the end of the column as the rear guard.

The movement from the Koto-ri perimeter commenced at 1500 when H&S Company of RCT-1 departed. The 2d Battalion(-) of the 11th Marines fell in behind, followed in order by a detachment of the 185th

³⁵ 1stMarDiv PIR 47. Bates interv, 16Mar53; Schmuck-Bridges-Bates interv, 8 Aug 56; Schmuck Comments.

³⁶ 7thMar SAR, 26; 11thMar SAR, 9-10; Smith *Chronicle*, 112; 1stMTBn SAR, 14; Gen O. P. Smith ltr, 21 Oct 56.

³⁷ 5thMar SAR, 34-36; 1/5 SAR, 20; 2/5 SAR, 31; 3/5 SAR, 17-18; LtCol J. W. Stevens, II, Comments, 19 Oct 56.

(C) Engineers, USA, the 2d Battalion of the 31st Infantry, USA, the 2d Battalion of RCT-1, the Division Reconnaissance Company and Lieutenant Colonel Milne's tank column, consisting of Companies B and D of the 1st Tank Battalion, the Tank Company of the 31st Infantry, USA, and the Tank Platoon of the 5th Marines AT Company.³⁸

As the last elements left Koto-ri the 92d FA Battalion at Chinhung-ni began laying heavy concentrations on the evacuated base. Only scattered shots were received by the tail of the column from Chinese troops mingling with the Korean refugees. Several small enemy groups on the flanks of the column were taken under fire and dispersed.³⁹ But with 3/1 guarding Objectives A, B and C, no serious opposition developed during the first stage of the withdrawal.

Completion of Division Breakout

At dusk on 10 December all indications made it appear that the movement of the 1st Marine Division southward would be completed according to plan with only minor losses of personnel and equipment. Following the seizure of Hill 1081, casualties had been comparatively light and enemy resistance ineffectual. Then, between midnight and 0100 on 11 December, two reverses occurred in areas the Marines supposed to be safe.

The MSR south of Chinhung-ni was under the protection of troops of the 3d Infantry Division—Task Force Dog at Chinhung-ni, and two battalions of the 65th Infantry in the vicinity of Sudong and Majongdong. It was manifestly impossible, of course, for the Army troops to guard every yard of the road, for the rugged terrain offered many potential ambush sites.⁴⁰ Guerrilla activity had been reported near Sudong, but the division trains and the 5th and 7th Marines had passed through without incident.

On the afternoon of the 10th, Korean civilians warned of an impending attack by Chinese soldiers who had infiltrated into this village. As

³⁸ 1stMar SAR, 26; 2/1 SAR, 19; 1stMar (S-3) URpt 13, 16-17. The Marine Provisional Tank Platoon had reached Koto-ri with only two M4A3 tanks, one of which had to be cannibalized. Then the platoon was disbanded and integrated with its remaining M4A3 into B and D Companies. All the other tanks in the column were M-26s.

³⁹ CO 1stMar msg to CG 1stMarDiv, 1700 10 Dec 50; Col C. A. Youngdale Comments, 19 Nov 56.

⁴⁰ MajGen E. W. Snedeker Comments, n. d., and MajGen A. D. Mead, USA, ltr to Gen Snedeker, 6 Dec 56.

previously indicated, Colonel Snedeker had arrived at Chinhung-ni the previous afternoon. At his suggestion Task Force Dog sent out an infantry patrol which returned with a report of no enemy activity.

At dusk an attack on the traffic turnaround outside Sudong caused Snedeker to halt all traffic at Chinhung-ni until the MSR was cleared. After a fire fight in the darkness, elements of the 65th Infantry reported at dusk that the enemy roadblock had been cleared, and the Marine column resumed its movement southward.⁴¹

During the next few hours Colonel Snedeker's worst problem was lack of transport. The Division had requested that the maximum number of trucks, ambulances and narrow-gauge freight cars be collected at Majon-dong, the new railhead. Only about 150 trucks were actually made available, however, 110 of them being from Division service units in the Hungnam area.

In spite of this shortage, the flow of traffic was being maintained when an explosion of CCF activity brought every thing to a stop at Sudong shortly after midnight. Mountain defiles had usually been the scene of enemy ambushes, but this time the Chinese swarmed out from behind houses in the village with grenades and burp guns. Several truck drivers of the RCT-1 regimental train were killed by the first shots and their vehicles set on fire. In the flickering light a confused fight ensued as trucks to the rear stopped. The Marines of the RCT-1 train resisted as best they could, but leadership was lacking until Lieutenant Colonel John U. D. Page, USA, and Marine PFC Marvin L. Wasson teamed up as a two-man task force which routed a group of about 20 Chinese at the head of the vehicle column. The valiant Army artillery officer paid with his life, and Wasson received two wounds from a grenade explosion. Pausing only for first aid, he got back into the fight as another Army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Waldon C. Winston, commanding the 52d Transportation Truck Battalion, USA, directed a counterattack by Marine and Army service troops. Harry Smith, a United Press correspondent, also had a part in the action.

Wasson called for a machine gun to cover him while he fired three white phosphorus rounds from a 75mm recoilless at a house serving

⁴¹ This is probably the same action referred to in 3dInfDiv CR, Dec 50, as occurring at 0130 11 Dec. The account of the Sudong ambush is based on: 1stMar SAR, 26; 1stMar URpt (S-3) 13, 18; Narrative of Col W. C. Winston, USA, 14 Jan 55; Cpl M. L. Wasson ltr to Col Winston, 16 May 51; Cpl D. E. Klepsig interv by H. L. Page, Jr., 6 Mar 52; Capt N. A. Canzona and J. C. Hubbell, "The 12 Incredible Days of Col John Page," *Readers Digest*, lxxix, no. 4 (Apr 56), 84-86. The Page and Winston material is in the possession of Capt Canzona.

the enemy as a stronghold. It burst into flames and the survivors who ran out were cut down by machine-gun fire. The Marine PFC, a jeep driver who was dubbed "The Spirit of '76" by Winston, then volunteered to help push trucks of exploding ammunition off the road.

Winston gradually brought order out of chaos, but it was daybreak before the MSR was cleared so that the column could start moving again. The RCT-1 regimental train had suffered casualties of eight killed and 21 wounded, while equipment losses consisted of nine trucks and an armored personnel carrier.

Lack of infantry protection was a factor in another reverse which occurred at the tail of the Division column. General Smith's final orders for withdrawal provided that the tanks were to come out behind the 1st Marines' train with the infantry of that regiment bringing up the rear.⁴² Thus a breakdown in the armored column would not block the road for wheeled vehicles, yet the tanks would have protection against close-in attack.

The 1st Marines prepared detailed plans for the leapfrogging of battalions during the final withdrawal phase. In effect these called for 2/1 to relieve 1/5 on Objective D and remain there until relieved in turn by 2/31. The Army battalion would hold until 3/1 passed through, then follow Ridge's battalion down the MSR. After 2/1, 3/1 and 2/31 had passed through Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck's positions around Hill 1081, 1/1 would follow as rear guard.⁴³

The first departure from plan occurred when Lieutenant Colonel Sutter discovered, after starting up Hill 1457, that Objective D was so far from the road and so steep that most of the night would be required merely for the battalion to make the climb. No enemy having been sighted, he asked permission to return to the road and continue along the MSR. This request was granted by Colonel Puller and 2/1 resumed the march, followed by 2/11(-), 2/31 and H&S Company of RCT-1 in that order. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge's 3/1, which remained on Objectives A, B and C until 2100, fell in at the end of the regimental column.⁴⁴

About midnight, after waiting for 3/1 to move down the pass, the tank column began its descent with only Recon Company as protection. Lieutenant Hargett's platoon of 28 men guarded the last ten

⁴² CG 1stMarDiv ltr to COs 1st, 5th, and 7thMars, 1530 9 Dec 50.

⁴³ 1stMar *OpnO* 16-50, 7 Dec 50. This order issued before the decision to send the tanks down the MSR in one group makes no mention of protecting the armor.

⁴⁴ 1stMar *URpt* (S-3) 13, 18; Sutter interv, 8 Aug 56.

tanks and the other two platoons screened the middle and head of the column.⁴⁵ Behind the last machine, approaching as close as they dared, were the thousands of refugees. CCF soldiers had mingled with them, watching for an opportunity to strike, and Hargett had the task of keeping the Koreans at a respectful distance.

Progress was slow as the 40 tanks inched around the icy curves with lights on and dismounted crewmen acting as guides. Shortly before 0100 the ninth machine from the rear had a brake freeze which brought the tail of the column to a halt for 45 minutes. The rest of the tanks clanked on ahead, leaving the last nine stranded along the MSR southwest of Hill 1457 and about 2000 yards from the treadway bridge. The enemy took advantage of the delay when five CCF soldiers emerged in file from among the refugees as a voice in English called that they wished to surrender.⁴⁶

Hargett went to meet them cautiously, covered by Corporal George A. J. Amyotte's BAR. Suddenly the leading Chinese stepped aside to reveal the other four producing hidden burp guns and grenades. Hargett pulled the trigger of his carbine but it failed him in the sub-zero cold. The former all-Marine football star then hurled himself at the enemy group, swinging his carbine. He crushed a Chinese skull like an eggshell, but a grenade explosion wounded him as the ambush developed into an attack from the high ground on the flank as well as the rear.

Before the remaining four Chinese could do Hargett any further harm, Amyotte shot them down, one by one. The fight turned into a wild melee in which friend could hardly be distinguished from foe.

Hargett's platoon slowly fell back until the last tank was lost to the enemy along with its crew. The men in the next to last tank had butted up and could not be aroused to their danger by banging on the hull with rifle butts. While making the effort Hargett was stunned by an enemy explosive charge which blew PFC Robert D. DeMott over the sheer drop at the side of the road, leaving him unconscious on a

⁴⁵ Neither Capt Bruce F. Williams, commanding Baker Company, nor his platoon leaders realized that Hargett's men were screening the rear of the tank column. Maj B. F. Williams Comments, 26 Dec 56.

⁴⁶ This description of the ambush at the rear of the tank column is based upon: Capt E. C. Hargett, interv by HistBr, G-3, 14 Dec 53; Maj W. Gall, 1stLt R. B. Grossman [sic], 1stLt F. R. Kraince, 1stLt E. C. Hargett, 2dLt C. E. Patrick, and 2dLt D. W. Sharon, interv by Capt K. A. Shutts, 11 Feb 51; *MCB Study*, II-C-111-113; Smith, *Notes*, 1087; HqBn *URpt* 14; Williams Comments, 26 Dec 56; Maj E. C. Hargett Comments, 17 Oct 56.

ledge. The other men of his platoon believed that he had been killed and continued their withdrawal, only to find the next seven tanks abandoned with their hatches open.

Amoyotte, wearing body armor, was covering the retirement, firing from prone, when a CCF grenade exploded after landing squarely on his back. The Chinese must have suspected black magic when he went on coolly picking off opponents as if nothing had happened.⁴⁷

It was a precarious situation for Hargett and his remaining 24 men. But they fought their way out without further casualties, and meanwhile tank crewmen had succeeded in freeing the brake of the lead tank and driving two tanks down the road. One of them was brought out by Corporal C. P. Lett, who had never driven before. "I'm going to get this tank out of here even if I get killed doing it!" he told Hargett. By sheer determination, coupled with luck, he maneuvered around the obstacles ahead and down the icy road to safety.

Captain Gould and his demolitions crew of engineers had been waiting for hours to blow the treadway bridge after the last elements of the Division crossed. With the passage of the two tanks and Hargett's platoon, it was believed that all Marines who could be extricated were safely over the span. On this assumption, which later proved to be erroneous, CWO Willie Harrison set off the demolition charges.

The losses of the Recon platoon were three men MIA (two of them later changed to KIA) and 12 wounded. Crews of the two rear tanks were missing and presumed dead.⁴⁸ Hargett's losses would have been more severe except for the fact that some of his men were wearing Marine body armor made of light-weight plastics.

To another man of Hargett's platoon went the distinction of being the last Marine out at the finish of the Chosin Reservoir breakout. When durable PFC DeMott recovered consciousness, after being blown over the brink by the CCF pack charge explosion, he found himself precariously perched on a ledge overhanging the chasm. Slightly wounded,

⁴⁷ Developed by the scientists of the Naval Field Medical Research Laboratory at Camp Lejeune, the ordinary utility jackets contained thin plates of fiberglass which would stop most shell or grenade fragments. Five hundred jackets had been air-shipped to the 1st Marine Division for field tests, but other supplies had a higher priority during the Chosin Reservoir campaign and only the 50 garments sent to Recon Company were worn in combat. Lynn Montröss, "Development of Our Body Armor," *Marine Corps Gazette*, xxxix, no. 6 (Jun 55), 10-16. The full story of the development of body armor, one of the most important tactical innovations of the Korean conflict, will be told in the next two volumes of this series.

⁴⁸ CO 1stTkBn tel to G-3 1stMarDiv, n.t., 11 Dec 50, gives tank personnel losses as 4 MIA.

he managed to climb back on the road, where he encountered only Korean refugees. Upon hearing a tremendous detonation he realized that the bridge had been blown. He remembered, however, that pedestrians could cross through the gatehouse above the penstocks, and he came down the mountain with the refugees to Chinhung-ni. There he was given a welcome befitting one who has cheated death of a sure thing.

The remaining tanks made it safely to Chinhung-ni without benefit of infantry protection other than what was afforded by Recon Company.⁴⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck did not receive a copy of 1stMar *OpnO* 16-50, he explained, his only information being a Frag O designating 1/1 as rear guard and "a hasty, 30-second conference" with Colonel Puller when the 1st Marine command group passed through. "I was informed," he added, "that the tanks were in the rear of the 1st Marines, that 2d Bn, 31st Infantry was bringing up the rear, and that as soon as that unit passed, I would employ my battalion as rear guard. . . . No mention at all was made of the Reconnaissance Company. In order to check off the units that passed endlessly through my lines, I established a check point at the incline railway overpass and kept a close record of movement."

A great deal of intermingling of units was observed by the 1/1 commander. At 0300, after sighting the lights of the tanks, he gave orders for Able Company to commence the withdrawal, in order "to consolidate my battalion for the rear guard action prior to daybreak. . . . When the first tanks reached my position, I was first startled to find no 2/31 accompanying them and then flabbergasted to discover that the Recon Company was somewhere out there 'screening' the movement. This canceled my carefully laid covering plan."⁵⁰

No further trouble resulted for the tanks and Recon Company. Ahead of them the infantry units continued the movement southward from Chinhung-ni chiefly by marching because of the shortage of trucks. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's men proved that footslogging is not a lost art by covering the 22 miles from Koto-ri to Majon-dong in a 20-hour hike with packs, heavy parkas, individual weapons and sleeping bags.⁵¹

Battle casualties of the division for the final stage, the attack from Koto-ri southward, were as follows:

⁴⁹ 1stTkBn *SAR*, 36; Snedeker narrative, Apr 51; Statement of N. A. Canzona, n. d.; Williams Comments, 26 Dec 56.

⁵⁰ Schmuck Comments.

⁵¹ LtCol Sutter interv, 8 Aug 56.

Date	KIA	DOW	MIA	WIA	Totals ¹
8 Dec.....	29	8	4	127	168
9 Dec.....	6	7	1	46	60
10 Dec.....	7	5	8	45	65
11 Dec.....	9	4	3	38	54
Totals	51	24	16	256	347

¹ DivAdjutant SAR, appendix II, 3.

At 1300 on 11 December the last elements of the Division cleared Chinhung-ni. Majon-dong had been left behind at 1730 without audible regrets; and by 2100 all units, with the exception of the tanks, had reached assigned assembly areas in the Hamhung-Hungnam area. The armored column arrived at the LST staging area of Hungnam half an hour before midnight, thus bringing to an end the breakout of the 1st Marine Division.⁵²

⁵² Smith, *Notes*, 1091.

CHAPTER XV

The Hungnam Redeployment

Marines Billeted in Hungnam Area—Embarkation of 1st Marine Division—The Last Ten Days at Hungnam—Marines Arrive at New Assembly Area—Contributions of Marine Aviation—Losses Sustained by the Enemy—Results of the Reservoir Campaign

“WAVE AND LOOK HAPPY!” These were the first words to greet some of the weary, unshaven Marines upon arrival in the Hamhung-Hungnam area. They grinned obligingly in response to the press photographers snapping pictures of the motor column from the roadside. They were happy indeed to be back in a world of hot meals and hot baths. They were happy to be alive.

Marines and attached Army troops found it astonishing as well as flattering to learn that such expressions as “epic” and “saga” and “miracle of deliverance” were being applied to the breakout in American newspapers. The press correspondents in turn were astonished to learn that never for a moment had the men doubted that they would slug their way out to the seacoast.

“The running fight of the Marines and two battalions of the Army’s 7th Infantry Division from Hagaru to Hamhung—40 miles by air but 60 miles over the icy, twisting mountainous road—was a battle unparalleled in U. S. military history,” commented *Time*. “It had some aspects of Bataan, some of Anzio, some of Dunkirk, some of Valley Forge, some of the ‘Retreat of the 10,000’ (401–400 B. C.) as described in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*.”

Not until the Marines had fought their way as far as Chinhung-ni, the weekly newsmagazine continued, did there appear to be much hope that they would come out as an organized force. Then “for the first time it looked as if most of the 20,000 [Marines] would get through.”¹

¹ *Time, the Weekly Newsmagazine*, lvi, no. 25 (18 Dec 50), (Pacific Edition), 18–19.

By reading contemporary press accounts it is possible to recapture the mood of the American public upon realization of the disaster which had overtaken the Eighth Army. "It was defeat—the worst defeat the United States ever suffered," reported *Time* in the issue of 11 December 1950. "The Nation received the fearful news from Korea with a strange-seeming calmness—the kind of confused, fearful, half-believing matter-of-factness with which many a man has reacted upon learning that he has cancer or tuberculosis. The news of Pearl Harbor, nine years ago to the month, had pealed out like a fire bell. But the numbing facts of the defeat in Korea seeped into the national consciousness slowly out of a jumble of headlines, bulletins, and communiques; days passed before its enormity finally became plain."²

Newsweek called it "America's worst military licking since Pearl Harbor. Perhaps it might become the worst military disaster in American history. Barring a military or diplomatic miracle, the approximately two-thirds of the U. S. Army that had been thrown into Korea might have to be evacuated in a new Dunkerque to save them from being lost in a new Bataan."³

The situation in west Korea was depressing enough. But at least the Eighth Army had a line of retreat left open. It was with apprehension that the American public stared at front-page maps showing the "entrapment" of the 1st Marine Division and attached U. S. Army units and British Marines by Chinese forces. Press releases from Korea did not encourage much expectation that the encircled troops could save themselves from destruction by any means other than surrender. In either event the result would be a military catastrophe without a parallel in the Nation's history.

The first gleam of hope was inspired by the news that the Marines had seized the initiative at Yudam-ni and cut a path through Chinese blocking the route to Hagaru. Then came the thrilling reports of the air drops of supplies at Hagaru and the mass evacuation of casualties by air. Much of the humiliation felt by newspaper readers was wiped

² *Time*, lvi, no. 24 (11 Dec 50), (Pacific Edition), 9.

³ *Newsweek*, xxxvi, no. 24 (11 Dec 50) 11. "Such quotations," comments General MacArthur, referring to the excerpts from *Time* and *Newsweek*, "certainly do not reflect the mood of the American public at the time, but rather the emotional reaction of irresponsible writers. . . . Neither [of the two news magazines] had the slightest access to the basic information and factors which involved the decisions and operations of our government and its higher military commanders. . . . The unreliability of these nonprofessional estimates of the situation is indeed eloquently demonstrated by comparing them with the actual military reports by the commands involved." Gen D. MacArthur ltr to MajGen E. W. Snedeker, 17 Oct 56.

clean by pride as General Smith's troops fought through to Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni in sub-zero cold. The air drop of the bridge sections was a dramatic climax to the realization that what had been a hope was now a fact—the Chosin Reservoir troops had saved themselves and inflicted a major defeat on the Chinese Communists in the doing. Testimony of POWs had left no doubt that the mission of the three CCF corps was the annihilation of the surrounded United States forces, but the result had been enemy losses which did not fall far short of annihilation of the CCF units themselves.

It was in a spirit of prayerful thanksgiving, therefore, that Americans read about the column of grimy, parka-clad men which came out of the mountains of northeast Korea on 11 December 1950. They had come out fighting and they had brought their wounded and most of their equipment out with them.

Marines Billeted in Hungnam Area

As late as 9 December it had been General Smith's understanding that the 1st Marine Division would occupy a defensive sector south and southwest of Hungnam. Then Colonel McAllister at Hungnam was notified by X Corps that plans for the defense of the Hungnam area had been changed, so that the Marines were to embark immediately for redeployment by water to South Korea. General Smith was informed on the 10th, and so promptly was the new plan put into effect that the first Marine units were already loading out before the last elements of the Division arrived at Hungnam.⁴

No changes were necessary in the plans for the reception of Marine units in the Hungnam area worked out by Colonel Snedeker and Colonel McAllister on orders of General Smith. On 8 December, Snedeker had issued detailed instructions which designated defensive sectors for RCT-1 at Chigyong and for RCT-5 and RCT-7 in the vicinity of Yonpo Airfield. The 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion was charged with making such preparations to receive the returning troops as putting up tents, installing stoves, erecting heads and equipping galleys.⁵

⁴ The Division Embarkation Section began revision of its standby embarkation order on 10 December and the following day was able to issue Embarkation Order 3-50. EmbO memo to HistO, subj: Historical Diary, 19 Dec 50.

⁵ Smith, *Notes*, 1065-1066, 1119; 1stMarDiv memo: "Plan for receiving 1stMarDiv Units, Hamhung-Hungnam area," 0800 8 Dec 50.

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The Navy, as usual, was ready. On 15 November, it may be recalled, General Smith had candidly expressed his misgivings about the strategic outlook to Admiral Morehouse and Captain Sears. Morehouse was chief of staff to Admiral Joy, ComNavFE, and Sears served in a like capacity under Admiral Doyle, CTF-90. This frank discussion had not fallen upon deaf ears; and on the 28th, only a few hours after the first CCF attacks at Yudam-ni, ComNavFE alerted CTF-90 as to the possible need for a redeployment operation by sea. The following day Joy advised that events in the Chosin Reservoir area made it desirable for ships of TF-90 to be on six hours' notice either in Korean waters or at Sasebo, Japan.⁶

CTF-90 commenced planning immediately for either an administrative or emergency outloading. His OpnO 19-50, issued on the 28th for planning purposes, provided for half of the amphibious force to conduct redeployment operations on the east coast under Doyle as ComPhibGruOne, while the other half had a similar mission on the west coast under Admiral Thackrey, ComPhibGruThree.

At this time ComPhibGruThree and most of the amphibious units were in Japanese ports for upkeep and replenishment. All were directed by Admiral Joy on the 29th to proceed to Sasebo.

ComPhibGruOne had just completed the opening of Hungnam as a major resupply port and was preparing to withdraw to Japan with the remaining amphibious force. On 30 November, however, the deteriorating situation of ground forces in Korea made it necessary for all units of TF-90 to be in Korean waters. The emergency appeared to be more critical on the west coast, and two-thirds of the smallest amphibious ships were allotted to the Inchon area while the transports were divided equally between Inchon and Hungnam.

The first week of December was devoted to planning and preparing for a redeployment of X Corps by sea which appeared more likely every day. Mine sweeping operations were resumed at Hungnam to enlarge the swept anchorage area and provide swept channels for gunfire support ships.

X Corps OpnO 9-50, issued on 5 December, provided for the defense of the Hungnam area by setting up a perimeter with a final defense line

⁶ Except when otherwise noted, the remainder of this section is based on the following sources: ComPhibGruOne, *Action Report, Hungnam*, 1-2, 4-6; Forney *Special Report*, 5-7; X Corps, *OpnO 9*, 5 Dec 50; X Corps, *Special Report on Hungnam Evacuation*, 2-3; X Corps *Ol 27*, 9 Dec 50; Gen L. C. Shepherd, Jr., ltr to MajGen E. W. Snedeker, 25 Oct 56.

about seven miles in radius. Pie-shaped sectors of fairly equal area, converging on the harbor, were assigned to the following major units from east to west—1st ROK Corps (less one division at Songjin), 7th Infantry Division, 3d Infantry Division (with the 1st KMC Regiment(-)), and the 1st Marine Division. The Marine sector included Yonpo Airfield.

On 8 December a conference held on board the *Mount McKinley* by ComNavFE and CTF-90 was attended by Vice Admiral Struble, Com7thFlt, Rear Admiral John M. Higgins, ComCruDivFive, and Lieutenant General Shepherd, CG FMFPac.

General Shepherd was present as "Representative of Commander Naval Forces, Far East, on matters relating to the Marine Corps and for consultation and advice in connection with the contemplated amphibious operation now being planned."⁷

General Almond was directed on the 9th to redeploy to South Korea and to report to the commanding general of the Eighth Army after assembling in the Ulsan-Pusan-Masan area. He was to release the 1st ROK Corps as soon as possible to the ROK Army in the Samchok area. An assembly area in the vicinity of Masan, widely separated from the other units of X Corps, was specified for the 1st Marine Division.

CTF-90 was assigned the following missions:

- (1) Provide water lift for and conduct redeployment operations of UN forces in Korea as directed;
- (2) Control all air and naval gunfire support in designated embarkation areas;
- (3) Protect shipping en route to debarkation ports;
- (4) Be responsible for naval blockade and gunfire support of friendly units East Coast of Korea, including Pusan;
- (5) Be prepared to conduct small-scale redeployment operations, including ROK forces and UN prisoners of war;
- (6) Coordinate withdrawal operations with CG X Corps and other commands as appropriate;
- (7) Support and cover redeployment operations in the Hungnam or other designated Korean embarkation area.

⁷ ComNavFE endorsement on CG FMFPac ser 8432, 6 Dec 50. "Although it was not necessary for me to exercise my command functions," commented General Shepherd, "I had been orally directed to do so by both Admirals Radford and Joy if I considered it expedient. As I recall, I was directed to take charge of the naval phase of the evacuation of Hungnam as Representative of the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East. In compliance with these instructions I exercised close overall supervision of this phase of the operation and made suggestions to both Admiral Doyle and General Almond relative to the embarkation and evacuation of the Marine Forces from Hungnam." Shepherd ltr, 25 Oct 56.

No such large-scale sea lift of combined Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine elements, not to mention the ROK units, had been attempted since Okinawa. The time was so short, moreover, that action could not wait on detailed planning and organization. In any event the job had to be done.

An enormous fleet of shipping must be assembled from every available source in the Far East. More than 100,000 troops must be embarked, and it was estimated at first that 25,000 Korean refugees must be evacuated, though this figure had to be nearly quadrupled. Mountains of supplies and thousands of vehicles must be outloaded from a comparatively small port. While these activities were in progress, the perimeter must be protected with naval gunfire and aircraft against an enemy credited by X Corps G-2 estimates with the capabilities of launching an attack of six to eight depleted divisions against the Hamhung-Hungnam area.

It was aptly dubbed "an amphibious landing in reverse," since the plan called for the methodical shrinking of the perimeter, under cover of air strikes and naval gunfire, until the last platoon of the ground forces had embarked. Then would come the grand finale of the demotions.

Embarkation of 1st Marine Division

The Wonsan evacuation was instructive as a rehearsal for the Hungnam redeployment. From 2 to 10 December, Lieutenant Colonel Crowe's 1st Shore Party Battalion had charge of the outloading while sharing the defense of the harbor with a battalion from the 3d Infantry Division and two KMC battalions. Another Marine outfit, Company A of the 1st Amphibian Truck Battalion, speeded up the operation by making hundreds of round trips between docks and ships with DUKWs.⁸

Air cover and naval gunfire from supporting ships of TE-90.21 was so effective that Wonsan had no enemy interference worth mentioning. Covering missions continued to be fired until the last friendly troops withdrew, and operations were completed without the necessity

⁸ The sources of this section, unless otherwise stated, are as follows: Forney, *Special Report*, 8-18; MCB Study, II-C-114-115; ComPhibGruOne *Action Report, Hungnam*, 5-10, 25; 1stMAW HD, Dec 50, 1-2; Smith, *Notes*, 120-1123; Maj R. W. Shuttles, *Report on Amphibious Withdrawal of the U. S. X Corps from Hungnam, Korea*, 1-9; MGCIS-1 HD, Dec 50; X Corps *OpnO* 10, 11 Dec 50; 1stMarDiv *Embo* 3-50, 11 Dec 50; Shepherd ltr, 25 Oct 56; LtGen W. H. Tunner, USAF, ltr to MajGen Snedeker, 8 Dec 56.

of destroying UN supplies and equipment. Altogether, 3834 troops, 7009 Korean civilians, 1146 vehicles, and 10,013 bulk tons of cargo had been outloaded when the operation was completed on 10 December. One detachment of Shore Party troops sailed for Pusan with the DUKWs in preparation for unloading the 1st Marine Division upon its arrival at that port.

The Hungnam evacuation plan, as outlined in X Corps OpnO 10-50, issued on 11 December, provided for the immediate embarkation of the 1st Marine Division and the 3d ROK Division. A smaller perimeter than the original concept was to be defended meanwhile by the 7th and 3d Infantry Divisions, with the latter having the final responsibility. Major units were to withdraw gradually by side-slipping until only reinforced platoons remained as covering forces holding strong points. Plans called for naval gunfire and air support to be stepped up as the perimeter contracted.

CTF-90 assumed control of all naval functions on 10 December after approving loading plans made at a conference of Navy officers and representatives of X Corps. Colonel Forney, Deputy Chief of Staff, X Corps, was appointed Corps evacuation control officer with responsibility for the operation of the Hungnam port and was assigned a small staff. Major Richard W. Shutts, of General Shepherd's party, was placed in charge of the Operations Section. Two more former TTUPac Marines on the X Corps staff were assigned sections—Major Charles P. Weiland, the Loading Section; and Major Jack R. Munday, the Navy Liaison Section. Lieutenant Colonel Harry E. Moiseil, USA, headed the Movement Section, and Captain William C. Cool, USA, the Rations Section.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Warren served as Colonel Forney's executive officer until he was incapacitated by pneumonia and relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Crowe.

The 2d Engineer Special Brigade, USA, was responsible for operation of the dock facilities, traffic control in the dock areas, and for furnishing Japanese stevedores, winch operators, cargo handling equipment, and dunnage. A reinforced company from the 1st Shore Party Battalion worked the LST and small craft beaches while controlling the lighterage for ships loading in the stream.

It was decided on 11 December that 1st Marine Division staging to assembly areas should commence immediately. Loading had to be expedited so that ships could be used for a second and even third turn-

and Marine planes also did much to discourage any hostile intentions the enemy may have had.

MGCIS-1, the ground control intercept squadron at Yonpo, stopped directing the high altitude fighters on 11 December and passed over to the USS *Mount McKinley* the task of keeping the perimeter clear of any enemy planes. Over-all control of air still remained ashore with MTACS-2.

At 1500 on the 13th General Smith went aboard the USS *Bayfield* and opened the Division CP. As his last duty on shore, he attended memorial services held by the Division at the Hungnam Cemetery. While the commanding general paid his tribute to the honored dead, Chinese POWs were making preparations for the interment of the last bodies brought down from Chinhung-ni.

The Marine loading was completed on the 14th. At a conference that day with CTF-90 on board the *Mount McKinley*, General Smith inquired as to the possibility of having the ships carrying the Marines unload at Masan instead of Pusan, thus saving a 40-mile movement by truck. Admiral Doyle pointed out that this procedure was not feasible because of the lack of lighterage facilities at Masan. The additional turn-around time, moreover, would have delayed the evacuation of remaining Corps units.

The 14th was also the day when Marine air strikes from Yonpo ended with the departure of the last of the Wing's land-based fighters for Japan. Shortly after midnight the Air Defense Section of MTACS-2 passed control of all air in the Hungnam area to the Navy's Tactical Air Control Squadron One of TF-90 aboard the USS *Mount McKinley*. The Marine squadron then set up a standby TACC aboard an LST until the final withdrawal on 24 December.

At 1030 on 15 December, as the *Bayfield* sailed, the curtain went down on one of the most memorable campaigns in the 175-year history of the Marine Corps. A total of 22,215 Marines had embarked in shipping consisting of an APA, an AKA, 3 APs, 13 LSTs, 3 LSDs, and 7 commercial cargo ships.

The Yonpo airlift continued, however, until 17 December when the field was closed and a temporary airstrip nearer the harbor was made available to twin-engine R4D's for the final phase of the air evacuation. The only Marine units left in Hungnam were a reinforced Shore Party company, an ANGLICO group and one and a half companies (88 LVTs) of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. They passed under the opera-

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tional control of X Corps to assist in the outloading of Army units. Also, Colonel Boeker C. Batterton, commanding MAG-12, had moved to Hungnam for the final evacuation of his air group from Yonpo and to arrange for loading its heavy equipment and remaining personnel aboard *SS Towanda Victory*. Then on 18 December he flew his command post to Itami.⁹

The Last Ten Days at Hungnam

With ten days remaining for the embarkation of the two Army divisions, the problem of Korean refugees threatened to disrupt the schedule. But CTF-90 contrived somehow to find the shipping, and the homeless Koreans were willing to put up with any hardships to escape from Communist domination. It became standard practice to embark at least 5000 on an LST, not counting children in arms, and no less than 12,000 human sardines found standing room on one commercial cargo ship.¹⁰

The most fragile link in the complex chain of operations was represented by the two 390-ton diesel electric tugs. No others were available, nor were spare parts to be had, yet both tugs had clocked more than 5000 running hours since the last overhaul. Thus it seemed almost a miracle that neither broke down for more than three hours in all, and repairs were made with materials at hand.

On the 18th, when the last ROKs sailed for Samchok, the 7th Infantry Division was in the midst of its outloading. By 20 December all troops of this unit had embarked, according to schedule. Responsibility for the defense of Hungnam then passed to Admiral Doyle as General Almond and his staff joined CTF-90 on board the flagship *Mount McKinley*. General Soule's 3d Division now manned the shore defenses alone.¹¹

When the perimeter contracted to the immediate vicinity of Hungnam, following the evacuation of Hamhung and Yonpo Airfield, two cruisers, seven destroyers, and three rocket-firing craft covered the entire front from their assigned positions in mine-swept lanes. A total of nearly 34,000 shells and 12,800 rockets was fired by these support

⁹ LtGen T. J. Cushman Comments, n. d.; MAG-12 *WD*, Dec 50.

¹⁰ Unless otherwise stated, the sources for this section are the same as for the last.

¹¹ VAdm J. H. Doyle ltr, 5 Oct 56.

ships, with the battleship *Missouri* contributing 162 16-inch rounds at the finish of the bombardment. About 800 more 8-inch shells and 12,800 more 5-inch shells were expended at Hungnam than during the naval gunfire preparation for the Inchon landing.

Seven embarkation sites were employed (see Map 30). From left to right they were designated as PINK Beach, BLUE Beach, GREEN One and Two Beaches, and YELLOW One, Two, and Three Beaches. The 7th RCT, holding the left sector, was to embark from PINK Beach. BLUE and GREEN One Beaches were assigned to the 65th RCT in the center, while the 15th RCT had GREEN Two and the three YELLOW Beaches.

H-hour had been set at 1100 on the 24th, and seven LSTs were beached at 0800 to receive 3d Infantry Division troops. Soon the three regiments were reduced to as many battalions which acted as covering forces while the other troops fell back to assigned beaches. All withdrawals were conducted methodically along specified routes by units using marking panels. Then the battalions themselves pulled out, leaving only seven reinforced platoons manning strong points. The Hungnam redeployment came to an end when these platoons boarded an LST after a search for stragglers. Air and naval gunfire support had made it an uneventful finish except for the accidental explosion of an ammunition dump on PINK Beach, resulting in two men killed and 21 wounded.

All beaches were clear by 1436 on Sunday afternoon, the 24th, with Able and Baker Companies of the Amtrac Battalion sticking it out to the end. Marines of these units provided fires to cover the flanks of the last withdrawals and manned 37 LVTs evacuating Army troops from PINK Beach. With the exception of three LVTs lost in the ammunition dump explosion on that beach, all LVTs and LVT(A)s were safely reembarked on LSDs at the finish of the operation.¹²

Remarkably few supplies had to be left behind for lack of shipping space. Among them were 400 tons of frozen dynamite and 500 thousand-pound bombs. They added to the tumult of an awe-inspiring demolitions scene. The entire Hungnam waterfront seemed to be blown sky-high in one volcanic eruption of flame, smoke, and rubble which left a huge black mushroom cloud hovering over the ruins.

The chill, misty dawn of Christmas Day found the *Mount McKinley* about to sail for Ulsan with CTF-90 and Generals Almond and

¹² 1st AmphTracBn HD, Dec 50, 5.

HUNGNAM DOCKS AND BEACHES

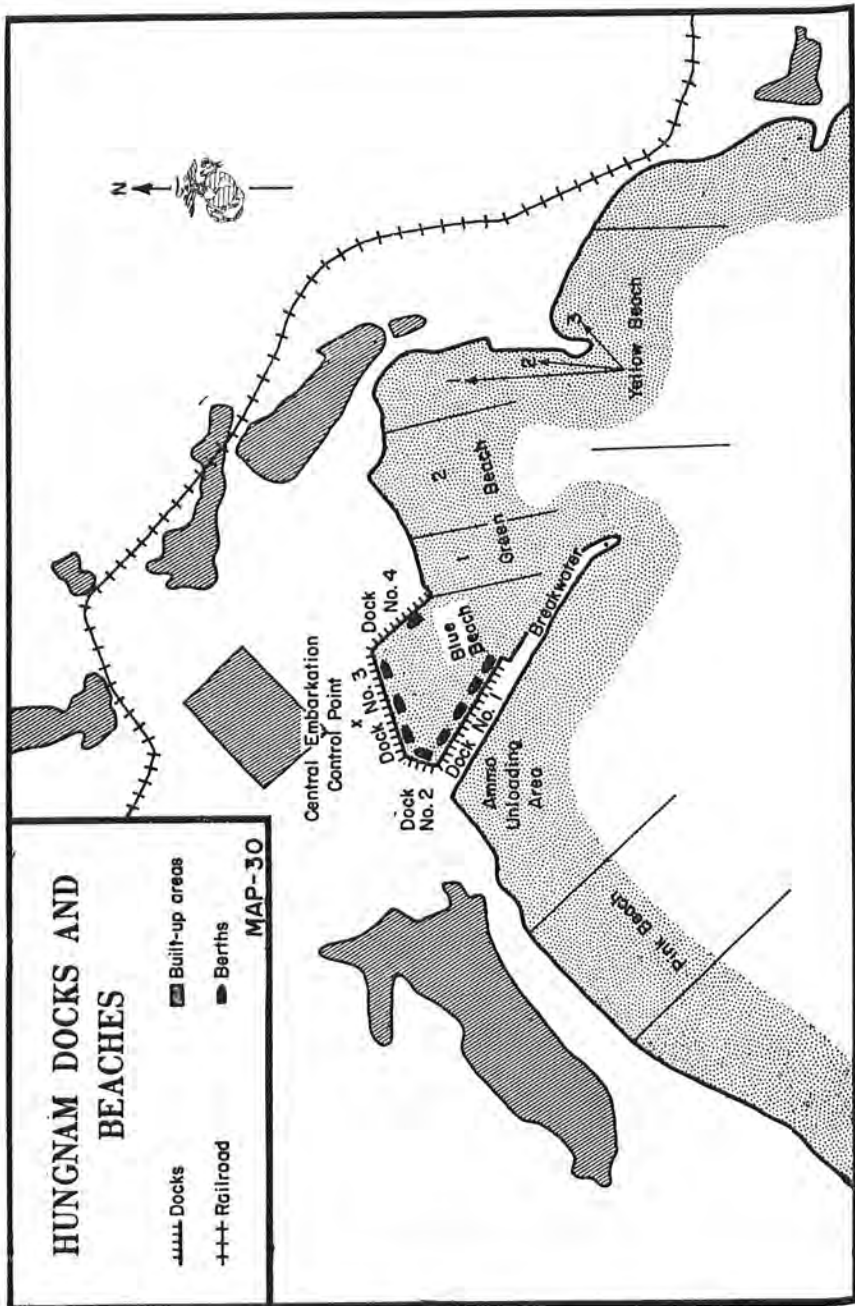
----- Docks

■ Built-up areas

++++ Railroad

● Berths

MAP-30



Shepherd after an eminently successful operation. It had been pretty much the Navy's show, in the absence of enemy interference, and the final statistics were staggering—105,000 military personnel, 91,000 Korean refugees, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 measurement tons of cargo loaded out in 193 shiploads by 109 ships.

"With naval, air and surface units effectively isolating the beach-head, we were able to take our time and get everything out," commented Admiral Joy on 26 December. "Admiral Doyle has turned in another brilliant performance. We never, never contemplated a Dunkirk—not even faintly."¹³

Marines Arrive at New Assembly Area

While the remaining X Corps units completed unloading at Hungnam, the Marines were landing at Pusan and proceeding by motor march to their new assembly area in the vicinity of Masan. General Craig, the ADC, had gone ahead with the advance party from Hungnam and made arrangements for the reception of the Division.¹⁴

News from the front in West Korea was not encouraging as the Eighth Army planned further withdrawals, for G-2 reports indicated that the advancing Chinese were about to launch a great new offensive shortly. Despite the persistent rumors that all Korea might be evacuated by UN forces, General MacArthur insisted in his special communique of 26 December that operations "were skilfully conducted without loss of cohesion and with all units remaining intact. . . .

In its broad implications I consider that these operations, initiated on 24 November and carried through to this [Hungnam] redeployment, have served a very significant purpose—possibly in general result the most significant and fortunate of any conducted during the course of the Korean campaign.

The might of a major military nation was suddenly and without warning thrown against this relatively small United Nations Command but without attaining a decision.

Due to intervening circumstances beyond our power to control or even detect, we did not achieve the United Nations objective.

But at a casualty cost less than that experienced in a comparable period of

¹³ CinCFE Special Communique, 26 Dec 50, with attached report from Gen Almond and a Navy announcement in *New York Times*, 27 Dec 50.

¹⁴ Smith, *Notes*, 1126. A detailed account of the arrival of the 1st Marine Division at Pusan and Masan will be found in the first chapter of Volume IV of this series.

defensive fighting on the Pusan perimeter, we exposed before too late secret political and military decisions of enormous scope and threw off balance enemy preparations aimed at surreptitiously massing the power capable of destroying our forces with one mighty extended blow.¹⁵

Questions as to the proper evaluation of the Eighth Army withdrawal turned into a controversy during coming months with political as well as military implications. Press representatives, military critics and soldiers of other nations, while crediting MacArthur with a great victory at Inchon, were for the most part of the opinion that the Eighth Army withdrawal of November and December was a costly reverse.¹⁶

Marine officers in Korea had no first-hand knowledge of EUSAK operations. It was obvious, however, that an Eighth Army retirement south of the 38th Parallel had made it desirable if not actually necessary for X Corps to withdraw from northeast Korea, even though General Almond held that a Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter could be defended throughout the winter.

Contributions of Marine Aviation

The close coordination of aviation with the ground forces in the Chosin campaign was due in large measure to the assignment of additional pilots to the 1st Marine Division as forward air controllers. They had been plucked from 1st Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons barely in time to join their battalions before embarking at Inchon. Increasing the number of FACs to two per battalion did much to bring air support down to the company level when needed.¹⁷

¹⁵ CinCFE Special Communique, 26 Dec 50.

¹⁶ General MacArthur's comments are as follows: "This, again, is a non-professional estimate belied by the facts and the viewpoints of all senior commanders present. . . . It was the purpose of Red China to overwhelm and annihilate, through a 'sneak' attack, the Eighth Army and X Corps by the heavy assault of overwhelming forces of a new power, not heretofore committed to war, against which it knew or rightly surmised there would be no retaliation. This plan was foiled by our anticipatory advance which uncovered the enemy's plot before he had assembled all of his forces, and by our prompt strategic withdrawal before he could inflict a crippling blow of a 'Pearl Harbor' nature. . . . This was undoubtedly one of the most successful strategic retreats in history, comparable with and markedly similar to Wellington's great Peninsula withdrawal. Had the initiative action not been taken and an inert position of adequate defense assumed, I have no slightest doubt that the Eighth Army and the X Corps both would have been annihilated. As it was, both were preserved with practically undiminished potential for further action. I have always regarded this action, considering the apparently unsurmountable difficulties and overwhelming odds, as the most successful and satisfying I have ever commanded." MacArthur ltr, 17 Oct 56.

¹⁷ Air Officer SAR, 4.

Air units frequently had to rely upon charts with place names, grid coordinates, and scales different from those in the hands of the ground troops. Here the Marine system of the man on the ground talking the pilot onto the target by reference to visual land marks paid off.

Cloudy, stormy weather was common. Three night fighter pilots were lost because of icing, disorientation, and insufficient radio aids to navigation. Two VMF-212 land-based pilots saved themselves from destruction only by landing on the *Badoeng Strait* with their last drops of gas.

With the approach of winter and cold weather, aircraft on the landing strips had to be run up every two hours at night to keep the oil warm enough for early morning takeoffs. Ordnance efficiency dropped. Planes skidded on icy runways. Once, after a six inch snow, 80 men and ten trucks worked all night to clear and sand a 150-foot strip down the runway at Yonpo.¹⁸

As early as mid-November it once took hours of scraping and chipping on the *Badoeng Strait* to clear three inches of glazed ice and snow off the decks, catapults, arresting wires, and barriers. Planes which stood the night on the flight deck had to be taken below to the hangar deck to thaw out. On another occasion VMF-214 had to cancel all flight operations because 68-knot winds, heavy seas, and freezing temperatures covered the *Sicily's* flight deck and aircraft with a persistent coat of ice.

One pilot of VMF-323 had to return shortly after takeoff because water vapor froze in his oil breather tube in flight. With the back pressure throwing oil all over his windshield and billowing black vapor and smoke out of his cowl, he landed only to have the front of his Corsair burst into flames when the escaped oil dripped on the hot exhaust stacks. Quick work by the deck crews extinguished the fire.

A hazard as great as being shot down was a crash landing or bail-out at sea, where the water was cold enough to kill a man in 20 minutes. Survival clothing and equipment was so bulky that pilots could barely get into their cockpits.

Maintenance and servicing problems ashore, complicated by dirt, dust, and the scarcity of parts, kept mechanics working to the point of exhaustion. Insufficient trucks forced the ground crews to refuel and

¹⁸ The material in this section is derived from: MAG-12 SAR, annex C, 10; VMF-214 SAR, annex F, 23; 1stMAW SAR, annex J, appendix S (VMF-323), 4, 9, 11; 1stMAW SAR, 5-7; Maj H. D. Kuokka Comments, n. d.

arm planes by hand, often from rusting fuel drums. Two destructive crashes, one fatal, were attributed to accumulated water in gasoline.

Aboard ship until mid-November, VMF-214 was able to keep 91 per cent of its planes operative. When suddenly deployed ashore to Wonsan, its aircraft availability dropped to 82 per cent and at Yonpo to 67 per cent. Once back at sea again in December, it jumped up to 90 per cent.

Basic difference in close air support doctrine between the Navy and Marines and Air Force were resolved by close and friendly liaison between the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the Fifth Air Force commands; by a Marine aviator attached to the Joint Eighth Army-Fifth Air Force Operations Center at Seoul; and by indoctrination of non-Marine units of the X Corps in the Marine-Navy style of close air support. Difficulties in inter-service communications slowed Fifth Air Force operations orders to carrier squadrons, both Navy and Marine. Messages were routed via FEAFF and ComNavFe in Tokyo and arrived hours late. Ashore, even MAG-12 during the first two weeks at Wonsan received its Fifth Air Force mission orders six to 36 hours late. A direct radio teletype between 1st MAW and 5thAF headquarters alleviated the situation. And when the CG 1st MAW received full control of the air over the X Corps area on 1 December, these problems were eased.

Actual control of air support for the scattered ground units demonstrated close cooperation between the Navy and Marine Corps. This was evident from the time the Navy's Tactical Air Control Squadron One on the USS *Mount McKinley* passed control to the Air Defense Section of MTACS-2 at Hamhung to the time that control returned to the ship in the Hungnam evacuation.

When the Marines had control, the ship stood by as an emergency TACC and acted as a radar reporting station for MTACS-2. When control was passed back afloat, the Air Defense Section of MTACS-2 stood by as a standby TACC aboard an LST until the last man was pulled off the beach. Furthermore, three officers from MGCIS-1 went aboard *Mount McKinley* to help out as Air Defense controllers. They were experienced. All through the Wonsan-Chosin campaign, the MGCIS had directed the defensive fighter patrols, circling Wonsan and Yonpo, to check all unidentified aircraft before the latter got close enough to do any damage. MGCIS-1 also steered lost planes to base in bad weather, occasionally vectored them into the GCA radar-controlled

landing pattern, and even assisted MTACCS-2 in directing air support planes to FACs.¹⁹

Tactical air support in the X Corps zone was directed to the ground units by the Air Support Section of MTACS-2. From 26 October to 11 December, 3703 sorties in 1053 missions were controlled by the TACPs of Marine, Army, and ROK units. Close air support missions accounted for 599 of the total (468 for 1st Marine Division, 8 for 3d Infantry Division, 56 for 7th Infantry Division, and 67 for ROKs). The remaining 454 missions were search and attack.²⁰

When FAC communications failed from valley to valley, aircraft became radio relays and controllers. This was highlighted by the airborne TADC, orbiting over the road from Hagaru.

Approximately half of the Marine air missions were in support of non-Marine ground units. The ROK and the U. S. Army units were not as well supplied with experienced FAC's as the 1st Marine Division. In these areas four Air Force "Mosquitos" (AT-6 "Texan" training planes) were assigned to X Corps to assist in the control of air support.²¹

When shore-based Marine air support was about to cease with the closing of Yonpo air field, VMF-214 and VMF-212 quickly moved their operations aboard carrier; and during the final phases of the Hungnam evacuation, almost half of the Marine tactical air strength was operating from carrier bases. VMF-214 flew back aboard *Sicily* on 7 December without missing a mission and VMF-212, which had moved to Itami on 4 December to draw and test a new complement of carrier Corsairs, was aboard the USS *Bataan* eight days later. When the month ended, still another squadron, VMF-312, was polishing up its carrier landing technique for seaborne duty.²²

The outcome of the Hagaru withdrawal owed much to air-dropped supplies and to casualty evacuations by General Tunner's Combat Cargo Command (CCC). Assisting Combat Cargo in Marine support were the Wing's R4D twin engine transports and TBM World War II type torpedo bombers, both of which were flown largely by the field-desk pilots on the Wing and Group staffs. Most of the Marines' share of the heavy airlifting, however, was done by the four engine R5D

¹⁹ MGCIS-1 HD Dec 50, 2; MTACS-2 HD Dec 50, 7.

²⁰ The remainder of this section, unless otherwise noted, is based upon Smith, *Notes*, 1149-1161, 1222.

²¹ 1stMAW HDs, Oct-Dec 50.

²² VMF-312 HD, Dec 50, 2.

transports of Colonel Dean C. Roberts' VMR-152. Early in October this squadron had been temporarily shifted from the trans-Pacific airlift of the Navy's Fleet Logistics Air Wing to support the Marines in the Wonsan campaign. In Korea its operations were controlled by the Combat Cargo Command, which committed an average of five Marine R5D's a day into the CCC airlift. In such missions these transports supported all UN units from Pyongyang to Yonpo and points north. Marine transports not committed by the CCC for general UN support in Korea were available for Wing use. From 1 November until Christmas, VMR-152 safely carried five million pounds of supplies to the front and evacuated more than 4000 casualties.²³

The Chosin Reservoir campaign opened two new chapters in Marine aviation history. The first was the use of the airborne TADC to control the air support of the division column between Hagaru and Chinhung-ni. The second was the appearance of VMF-311, the first Marine jet squadron to fly in combat. Beginning on 10 December the newly arrived squadron flew interdiction missions for four days from Yonpo. Then it moved to Pusan to operate for the remainder of the month with 5th Air Force jets streaking up the long peninsula to cover the withdrawal of the Eighth Army.²⁴

Appreciation for the assistance given by Marine aviation to Marine ground forces was expressed in a letter of 20 December from General Smith to General Harris, the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Air Wing. The Division Commander said:

Without your support our task would have been infinitely more difficult and more costly. During the long reaches of the night and in the snow storms many a Marine prayed for the coming of day or clearing weather when he knew he would again hear the welcome roar of your planes as they dealt out destruction to the enemy. Even the presence of a night heckler was reassuring.

Never in its history has Marine Aviation given more convincing proof of its indispensable value to the ground Marines. A bond of understanding has been established that will never be broken.²⁵

The story of air support in the Chosin Reservoir campaign would not be complete without a summary of the results of VMO-6. Marines took a proprietary interest in Major Gottschalk's squadron, which had put

²³ ComNavFE msg to CinCPacFlt, 0858 1 Oct 50; CinCPacFlt msg to ComNavFE, 2245 2 Oct 50; CG 1stMAW msg to CO VMR-152, 0620 12 Oct 50; VMF-152 SAR, 6; Col R. R. Yeaman Comments, 19 Sep 56 and 6 Nov 56. By 25 December when VMR-152 returned to Navy control it had flown 729,790 miles in Korean lifts and carried 8,068,800 pounds of cargo, 234,000 pounds of mail and 11,314 passengers, including 4276 casualties.

²⁴ 1stMAW SAR, annex K, appendix F (VMF-311), 2; VMF-311 HD, Dec 50.

²⁵ MajGen O. P. Smith ltr to MajGen F. Harris, 20 Dec 50.

into effect the helicopter techniques worked out at Quantico by the experimental squadron, HMX-1. Some of these techniques were having their first test in combat, for the development of rotary-wing aircraft in 1950 was at a pioneer stage comparable to that of fixed-wing aircraft in the first year of World War I. On 28 October, VMO-6 had a strength of 25 officers, 95 enlisted men, ten light fixed-wing aircraft (eight OY-2s, two L5Gs) and nine HO3S-1 helicopters. From that date until 15 December the squadron made 1544 flights for a total of 1624.8 hours. The principal missions were as follows:

Reconnaissance—OYs, 393; helicopters, 64; Transportation—OYs, 130; helicopters, 421; Evacuation—OYs, 29; helicopters, 191; Liaison—OYs, 35; helicopters, 90; Artillery spot—OYs, 39; helicopters, 0; Utility—OYs, 26; helicopters, 60; Rescue—OYs, 0; helicopters, 11.²⁶

But statistics can give no idea of the most significant achievement of VMO-6 in the Reservoir campaign. For during the most critical period the only physical contact between units separated by enemy action was provided by the OYs and helicopters. The importance of this contribution can hardly be overestimated.

Losses Sustained by the Enemy

Marine losses in northeast Korea, as reported to the Secretary of the Navy, included a total of 4418 battle casualties from 26 October to 15 December 1950—604 KIA, 114 DOW, 192 MIA, and 3508 WIA. The 7313 non-battle casualties consisted largely of minor frostbite and indigestion cases who were soon restored to active duty.²⁷ Eight Marine pilots were KIA or died of wounds, four were MIA, and three were wounded. General Smith estimated that a third of the non-battle casualties were returned to duty during the operation.²⁸

Enemy losses for the same period were estimated at a total of 37,500—15,000 killed and 7500 wounded by Marine ground forces, plus 10,000 killed and 5000 wounded by Marine air. Not much reliance can be placed in such figures as a rule, but fortunately we have enemy testimony as to heavy losses sustained by the Chinese Communists.

²⁶ VMO-6 SAR, 20; LtCol V. J. Gottschalk, *Transcript of Informal Remarks at HQMC*, 17 May 51.

²⁷ Smith, *Notes*, 1146-1149. See Appendix E for a day-by-day accounting of Marine casualties.

²⁸ Smith ltr, 21 Oct 56.

This evidence goes far toward explaining why they did not interfere with the Hungnam redeployment.

Contrary to expectations, Chinese military critiques have been candid in admitting failures and unsparing in self-criticism. Among captured documents are summaries of the operations of the three CCF armies encountered by the Marines in the Chosin Reservoir area. These major units, representing at least 11 and probably 12 divisions, were as follows:

20th CCF Army—58th, 59th, and 60th Divisions, with the 89th Division of the 30th Army attached;

26th CCF Army—76th, 77th, and 78th Division, with probably the 94th Division of 32d Army attached;

27th CCF Army—79th, 80th, and 81st Divisions, with the 70th Division of 24th Army attached.²⁹

All three armies were major units of the 9th Army Group of the 3d CCF Field Army. In mid-October the leading elements of the 4th CCF Field Army had crossed the Yalu to oppose the U. S. Eighth Army. The operations of X Corps in northeast Korea being considered a threat to the left flank, the 42d Army was detached with a mission of providing flank protection, pending relief by units of the 3d CCF Field Army. Three divisions, the 124th, 125th, and 126th were represented. While the last hovered on the left flank of the 4th Field Army, the 124th was hard hit near Sudong during the first week of November by RCT-7 of the 1st Marine Division.

In order to cover the withdrawal of the remnants, the 125th Division moved south of Hagaru from the Fusen Reservoir area. Both CCF divisions then fell back to Yudam-ni, where they were relieved by units of the 20th Army, 3d Field Army. This ended the operations of the 4th Field Army in northeast Korea.

Shortly after the appearance of the 20th Army in the Yudam-ni area, the 27th Army moved into positions north of the Chosin Reservoir. Thus the enemy had available eight divisions for the attacks of 27-28 November on the Marines in the Yudam-ni area and the three 7th Infantry Division battalions east of the Chosin Reservoir. If it may be assumed that these CCF divisions averaged 7500 men each, or three-

²⁹ A CCF army consisted of three or four divisions and therefore might be considered generally the equivalent of a U. S. corps. This account of CCF units and movements is derived from the *MGB Study*, II-C-116-125, which in turn is based on an analysis of CCF prisoner interrogations and captured enemy documents. The Board, consisting of senior officers, was given the mission in 1951 of preparing "an evaluation of the influence of Marine Corps forces on the course of the Korean War, 4 Aug 50-15 Dec 50."

fourths of full strength, the enemy had a total of 60,000 men in assault or reserve.

The Chinese, as we know, failed to accomplish their basic mission, which prisoners agreed was the destruction of the 1st Marine Division. In every instance the efforts of the first night were the most formidable, with enemy effectiveness declining sharply after a second or third attack. The explanation seems to be that the 12 divisions were sent into northeast Korea with supplies which would have been sufficient only if the first attempts had succeeded. The following comment by the 26th Army supports this conclusion:

A shortage of transportation and escort personnel makes it impossible to accomplish the mission of supplying the troops. As a result, our soldiers frequently starve. From now on, the organization of our rear service units should be improved.³⁰

The troops were hungry. They ate cold food, and some had only a few potatoes in two days. They were unable to maintain the physical strength for combat; the wounded personnel could not be evacuated. . . . The fire power of our entire army was basically inadequate. When we used our guns there were no shells and sometimes the shells were duds.

The enemy's tactical rigidity and tendency to repeat costly errors are charged by the 20th Army to inferior communications:

Our signal communication was not up to standard. For example, it took more than two days to receive instructions from higher level units. Rapid changes of the enemy's situation and the slow motion of our signal communication caused us to lose our opportunities in combat and made the instructions of the high level units ineffective. . . .

We succeeded in the separation and encirclement of the enemy, but we failed to annihilate the enemy one by one. The units failed to carry out the orders of the higher echelon. For example, the failure to annihilate the enemy at Yut'an-ni [Yudam-ni] made it impossible to annihilate the enemy at Hakalwu-ri [Hagaru]. The higher level units' refusal of the lower level units' suggestion of rapidly starting the combat and exterminating the enemy one by one gave the enemy a chance to break out from the encirclement.

One of the most striking instances of the tactical inflexibility which stultified Chinese efforts was found at Hagaru. With only a depleted Marine Infantry battalion and service troops available to defend a perimeter four miles in circumference, the enemy needed mere daylight observation to ascertain and avoid the most strongly defended positions.

³⁰ Translations of CCF documents referred to in this section are found in HQ 500th Military Intelligence Group, Document 204141, "Compilation of Battle Experiences Reported by Various Armies in their Operation Against U. S. Forces in Korea." Among the units covered are the 20th, 26th, and 27th Armies.

Yet these were just the positions chosen for the attack, not only on the first night but also the second occasion 48 hours later.

"The [CCF] tactics were mechanical," commented the 27th Army. "We underestimated the enemy so we distributed the strength, and consequently the higher echelons were overdispersed while the lower echelon units were overconcentrated. During one movement, the distance between the three leading divisions was very long, while the formations of the battalions, companies, and units of lower levels were too close, and the troops were unable to deploy. Furthermore, reconnaissance was not conducted strictly; we walked into the enemy fire net and suffered heavy casualties."

Summing up the reasons why the Marines at Yudam-ni were not "exterminated promptly," the 27th Army concludes that it was "because our troops encountered unfavorable conditions during the missions and the troops suffered too many casualties." This would seem to be another way of saying that the Chinese failed to destroy the 1st Marine Division because they themselves were nearly destroyed in the attempt. At any rate, evidence from the enemy documents points overwhelmingly to crippling losses both from Marine fire power and non-battle casualties chargeable to lack of equipment and supplies.

The 20th Army had a hundred deaths from tetanus caused by improper care of wounds. Hundreds of other soldiers were incapacitated by typhus or ailments of malnutrition and indigestion.

More than 90 per cent of the 26th Army suffered from frostbite. The 27th Army complained of 10,000 non-combat casualties alone out of a strength of four divisions:

The troops did not have enough food, they did not have enough houses to live in, they could not stand the bitter cold, which was the reason for the excessive non-combat reduction in personnel (more than 10 thousand persons), the weapons were not used effectively. When the fighters bivouacked in snow-covered ground during combat, their feet, socks, and hands were frozen together in one ice ball; they could not unscrew the caps on the hand grenades; the fuses would not ignite; the hands were not supple; the mortar tubes shrank on account of the cold; 70 per cent of the shells failed to detonate; skin from the hands was stuck on the shells and the mortar tubes.

Testimony as to the effects of Marine fire power is also given by the 26th Army:

The coordination between the enemy infantry, tanks, artillery, and airplanes is surprisingly close. Besides using heavy weapons for the depth, the enemy carries with him automatic light firearms which, coordinated with rockets, launchers, and recoilless guns are disposed at the front line. The

characteristic of their employment is to stay quietly under cover and open fire suddenly when we come to between 70 and 100 meters from them, making it difficult for our troops to deploy and thus inflicting casualties upon us.

The 20th and 27th Armies appear to have been bled white by the losses of the first week. Early in December, units of the 26th Army appeared on the east side of the MSR between Hagaru and Koto-ri, and this unit furnished most of the opposition from 6 to 11 December.

Seven divisions in all were identified by the 1st Marine Division; and since the taking of prisoners was not a matter of top priority with men fighting for existence, it is likely that other CCF units were encountered. The CCF 9th Army Group, according to a prisoner questioned on 7 December, included a total of 12 divisions. This POW gave the following statement:

Missions of the four (4) armies in 9th Group are to annihilate the 1st Division which is considered to be the best division in the U. S. After annihilating the 1st Marine Division they are to move south and take Hamhung.³¹

As to the reason why the Chinese took no advantage of the Hungnam redeployment, there seems little doubt that the 9th Army Group was too riddled by battle and non-battle casualties to make the effort. This is not a matter of opinion. Following the Hungnam redeployment, as the U. S. Eighth Army braced itself to meet a new CCF offensive, UN and FECOM G-2 officers were naturally concerned as to whether the remaining 9th Army Group troops in northeast Korea would be available to strengthen the CCF 4th Field Army. It was estimated that only two weeks would be required to move these troops to West Korea, where they had the capability of reinforcing the CCF attack against the Eighth Army.

Efforts to locate the 9th Army Group were unavailing for nearly three months. Then a prisoner from the 77th Division of the 26th Army was captured by U. S. Eighth Army troops on 18 March 1951. During the following week POW interrogations established that three divisions of the 26th Army were in contact with Eighth Army units northeast of Seoul.

"The only conclusion to be drawn," comments the *Marine Corps Board Study*, "based on information collected by 1stMarDiv and X

³¹ 1stMarDiv PIR 47, encl. 1. The four armies referred to by the POW were the 20th, 26th, 27th, and 30th. Actually the 30th Army did not exist, as one of its divisions had been attached to each of the other three armies.

Corps, and that by UN and FEC, is that all corps of 9th Army Group had been rendered militarily ineffective in the Chosin Reservoir operation and required a considerable period of time for replacement, re-equipment, and reorganization."³²

Thus it appears that the Marines not only saved themselves in the Chosin Reservoir fights; they also saved U. S. Eighth Army from being assailed by reinforcements from northeast Korea in the CCF offensive which exploded on the last night of 1950.

Results of the Reservoir Campaign

There could be no doubt, after taking into account the CCF mission, that the 9th Army Group, 3d Field Army, had sustained a reverse in northeast Korea which amounted to a disaster. On the other hand, it might have been asked whether a retrograde movement such as the Marine breakout, even though aggressively and successfully executed, could be termed a victory.

This question involves issues too complex for a clearcut positive answer, but it would be hard to improve upon the analysis of results in the *Marine Corps Board Study*:

Although the operations of this phase constitute a withdrawal, despite the fact that CG 1stMarDiv characterized them as "an attack in a new direction," the withdrawal was executed in the face of overwhelming odds and conducted in such a manner that, contrary to the usual withdrawal, some very important tactical results were achieved. These may be summarized as follows:

1. Extricated 1stMarDiv from a trap sprung by overwhelming enemy ground forces by skilful employment of integrated ground and air action which enabled the Division to come through with all operable equipment, with wounded properly evacuated and with tactical integrity.
2. Outfought and outlasted at least seven CCF divisions under conditions of terrain and weather chosen by the enemy and reputedly to his liking. Although frostbite took a heavy toll of the Division it hit CCF units far harder, perhaps decisively.
3. In the process of accomplishing "2" above, rendered militarily non-effective a large part of 9th CCF Army Group. Those units not contacted by 1stMarDiv were fixed in the Chosin Reservoir area for possible employment against the Division and consequently suffered from the ravages of sub-zero cold and heavy air attacks.

³² *MCB Study*, II-C-125.

4. As a direct result of "3" above, enabled X Corps to evacuate Hungnam without enemy interference and, consequently, as a combat effective unit with all personnel and serviceable equipment. Pressure on X Corps by 9th CCF Army Group during the seaward evacuation of the Corps, a most difficult operation, would undoubtedly have altered the result.³³

Improvisations in tactics were now and then made necessary by unusual conditions of terrain, weather or enemy action. But on the whole the Marines saved themselves in the Reservoir campaign by the application of sound military tactics. In the doing they demonstrated repeatedly that the rear makes as good a front as any other for the militarily skilled and stout-hearted, and that a unit is not beaten merely because it is surrounded by a more numerous enemy.

Inevitably the Marine campaign has been compared to that classic of all military breakouts—the march of the immortal Ten Thousand which is the subject of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Stranded in the hostile Persian Empire in the year 401 B. C., these Greek mercenaries cut their way to safety through Asiatic hordes. The following description of the tactics used by Xenophon and his lieutenant Chersiphus to overcome road blocks in mountain country will have a familiar ring to Marine veterans of the Reservoir:

The enemy, by keeping up a continuous battle and occupying in advance every narrow place, obstructed passage after passage. Accordingly, whenever the van was obstructed, Xenophon, from behind, made a dash up the hills and broke the barricade, and freed the vanguard by endeavoring to get above the obstructing enemy. Whenever the rear was the point attacked, Chersiphus, in the same way, made a detour, and by endeavoring to mount higher than the barricaders, freed the passage for the rear rank; and in this way, turn and turn about, they rescued each other, and paid unflinching attention to their mutual needs.³⁴

Spears and arrows have been superseded by bazookas and machine guns, but the basic infantry tactics of the Reservoir breakout were essentially those which served Xenophon and the Ten Thousand more than 33 centuries ago. Organization, combat, training, spirit, and discipline enabled the Marines, like the Hellenes before them, to overcome numerical odds and fight their way over Asiatic mountain roads to the sea.

The over-all strategic effects of the Reservoir campaign, as summarized by the Marine Corps Board Study, were as follows:

³³ Quotations in this section, except when otherwise noted, are from the *MCB Study*, II-C-125-127.

³⁴ Xenophon, *The Anabasis of Cyrus*, Henry C. Dakyns, trans., in F. R. B. Godolphin, *The Greek Historians*, (2 vols., New York, 1942), II, 297-298.

1. Played a prominent part . . . in enabling X Corps, a considerable segment of the total UN forces in Korea, to be withdrawn from Hungnam as a combat effective force available for employment with the Eighth Army in South Korea at a time when that Army was retreating and was in critical need of a reinforcement.

2. Were largely responsible for preventing reinforcement of CCF forces on Eighth Army front by 12 divisions during a period when such reinforcement might have meant to Eighth Army the difference between maintaining a foothold in Korea or forced evacuation therefrom, by being instrumental in rendering 9th CCF Army Group, a force of three corps of four divisions each, militarily noneffective for a minimum period of three months.

That the breakout of the 1st Marine Division had affected American political and military policy at the highest levels was the assertion of an editorial in *Time*. Referring to what it termed the "Great Debate," in December 1950, as to whether American forces should be withdrawn from Korea, the news-magazine commented:

When the Marines fought their way down to Hungnam through the "unconquerable Chinese hordes," and embarked for Pusan with their equipment, their wounded, and their prisoners, the war in Asia took on a different look. The news stories, pictures and newsreels of the Hungnam action contributed more to forming U. S. policy than all the words in the "Great Debate." The nation—and the revitalized Eighth Army—now knows that U. S. fighting men will stay in Korea until a better place and a better opportunity is found to punish Communist aggression.³⁵

General Douglas MacArthur as CINCUNC, in his 11th report of operations of UN forces in Korea, submitted the following to the United Nations Organization regarding the Chosin Reservoir operation:

In this epic action, the Marine Division and attached elements of the 7th Infantry Division marched and fought over 60 miles in bitter cold along a narrow, tortuous, ice-covered road against opposition of from six to eight Chinese Communist Force divisions which suffered staggering losses. Success was due in no small part to the unprecedented extent and effectiveness of air support. The basic element, however, was the high quality of soldierly courage displayed by the personnel of the ground units who maintained their integrity in the face of continuous attacks by numerically superior forces, consistently held their positions until their wounded had been evacuated, and doggedly refused to abandon supplies and equipment to the enemy.

United Nations Air Forces threw the bulk of their effort into close support of ground forces cutting their way through overwhelming numbers of Chinese Communists. The toll of the enemy taken by the United Nations aircraft contributed in large measure to the successful move of our forces from the Chosin Reservoir to the Hamhung area despite the tremendous odds against

³⁵ *Time*, lvii, no. 9 (26 Feb 51).

them. Air support provided by the United States Marine Air Force and Naval Aircraft in this beleaguered area, described as magnificent by the ground force commanders, represented one of the greatest concentrations of tactical air operations in history.³⁶

Rear Admiral James H. Doyle attributed the successful evacuation at Hungnam in large measure to the Marine breakout. Writing to General Smith several months later, he asserted that he had "filled in what has been a neglected page in the story of the Hungnam redeployment. It is simply this: that the destruction of enemy forces wrought by the First Marine Division on the march down the hill was a major factor in the successful withdrawal; and that the destruction was so complete the enemy was unable to exert serious pressure at any time on the shrinking perimeter. To my mind, as I told you at Hungnam, the performance of the First Marine Division on that march constitutes one of the most glorious chapters in Marine Corps history."³⁷

Letters of commendation were received by the 1st Marine Division from General Cates, CMC, General Shepherd, Admiral Joy, General Collins, Chief of Staff, USA, General Almond, and many other high-ranking military leaders. But for depth of feeling, for sincerity and emotion, there was no message which appealed more to the officers and men of the Division than the concluding paragraph of this tribute from the commanding general who had guided their destinies with unswerving courage and who had come out with them, Major General Oliver P. Smith:

The performance of officers and men in this operation was magnificent. Rarely have all hands in a division participated so intimately in the combat phases of an operation. Every Marine can be justly proud of his participation. In Korea, Tokyo and Washington there is full appreciation of the remarkable feat of the division. With the knowledge of the determination, professional competence, heroism, devotion to duty, and self-sacrifice displayed by officers and men of this division, my feeling is one of humble pride. No division commander has ever been privileged to command a finer body of men.³⁸

³⁶ Gen Douglas MacArthur, CinCUNC, *11th Report of the Operations in Korea of United Nations Forces*, 31 Jan 51. See Appendix H for transcript of Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the 1stMarDiv and the Distinguished Unit Citation awarded to the 1stMAW.

³⁷ RAdm J. H. Doyle ltr to MajGen O. P. Smith, 2 Mar 51.

³⁸ 1stMarDiv memo 238-50, 19 Dec 50.

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Technical Terms and Abbreviations

- ADC—Assistant Division Commander.
 AdmO—Administrative Order.
 AF—Air Force.
 AGC—Amphibious Force Flagship.
 AH—Hospital Ship.
 AirDelPlat—Air Delivery Platoon.
 AirO—Air Officer.
 AirSptSec—Air Support Section.
 AKA—Assault Cargo Ship.
 AKL—Cargo, Ship, Light.
 AM—Minesweeper.
 AmphTracBn—Amphibian Tractor Battalion.
 AmphTrkBn—Amphibian Truck Battalion.
 AMS—Auxiliary Motor Minesweeper.
 ANGLICO—Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company
 AP—Transport.
 APA—Assault Transport.
 APD—High Speed Transport.
 ARG—Internal Combustion Engine Repair Ship.
 ARL—Landing Craft Repair Ship.
 ArmdAmphBn—Armored Amphibian Battalion
 ARS—Salvage Vessel.
 AT—Antitank.
 ATF—Ocean Tug, Fleet.
 AutoMaintCo—Automotive Maintenance Company.
 AutoSupCo—Automotive Supply Company.
 BB—Battleship.
 BLT—Battalion Landing Team.
 Bn—Battalion.
 Btry—Battery.
 BuMed—Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.
 C-47—Douglas Transport (same as R4D).
 CA—Heavy Cruiser.
 CCF—Chinese Communist Forces.
 CG—Commanding General.
 CIC—Counter Intelligence Corps, USA.
 CinCFE—Commander in Chief, Far East.
 CinCPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.
 CinCUNC—Commander in Chief, United Nations Command.
 CL—Light Cruiser.
 CO—Commanding Officer.
 Co—Company.
 ComFltAirWing—Commander Fleet Air Wing.
 ComNavFE—Commander Naval Forces Far East.
 ComPacFlt—Commander Pacific Fleet.
 ComPhibGruOne—Commander Amphibious Group One.
 ComSeventhFlt—Commander Seventh Fleet.
 ComUNBlockandCortFor—Commander United Nations Blockade and Escort Force.
 CP—Command Post.
 CR—Command Report.
 C/S—Chief of Staff.
 CSG—Combat Service Group.
 CSUSA—Chief of Staff, U. S. Army.
 CTF—Commander Task Force.
 CTG—Commander Task Group.
 CVE—Escort Aircraft Carrier.

- CVL—Light Aircraft Carrier.
 DD—Destroyer.
 DDR—Radar Picket Destroyer.
 DE—Destroyer Escort.
 Det—Detachment.
 DMS—High Speed Minesweeper.
 DOW—Died of Wounds.
 EmbO—Embarkation Order.
 EmbO—Embarkation Officer.
 EngrBn—Engineer Battalion.
 EUSAK—Eighth U. S. Army in Korea.
 FABn—Field Artillery Battalion (USA).
 FAC—Forward Air Controller.
 FEAF—Far East Air Force.
 FECOM—Far East Command.
 F4U—Chance-Vought "Corsair" Fighter-Bomber.
 FMFPac—Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.
 FO—Forward Observer.
 FragOrder—Fragmentary Order.
 Fum&BathPlat—Fumigation and Bath Platoon.
 GHQ—General Headquarters.
 Gru—Group.
 H&SCo—Headquarters and Service Company.
 HD—Historical Diary.
 Hedron—Headquarters Squadron.
 HMS—Her Majesty's Ship.
 HMAS—Her Majesty's Australian Ship.
 HMCS—Her Majesty's Canadian Ship.
 HMNZS—Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship.
 HO3S—Sikorsky Helicopter.
 HqBn—Headquarters Battalion.
 HQMC—Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps.
 InfDiv—Infantry Division (USA).
 Interv—Interview.
 ISUM—Intelligence Summary
 JANIS—Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies.
 JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff.
 JMS—Japanese Minesweeper.
 JSPOG—Joint Strategic Planning and Operations Group.
 JTF—Joint Task Force.
 KIA—Killed in Action.
 KMC—Korean Marine Corps.
 Ln—Liaison.
 LSD—Landing Ship, Dock.
 LSM—Landing Ship, Medium.
 LSMR—Landing Ship, Medium-Rocket.
 LST—Landing Ship, Tank.
 LSTH—Landing Ship, Tank-Casualty Evacuation.
 LSU—Landing Ship, Utility.
 Ltr—Letter.
 LVT—Landing Vehicle, Tracked.
 MAG—Marine Aircraft Group.
 MAW—Marine Aircraft Wing.
 MS—Manuscript.
 MedBn—Medical Battalion.
 MedAmbCo—Medical Ambulance Company, USA.
 MIA—Missing in Action.
 MISD—Military Intelligence Service Detachment (USA).
 MP—Military Police.
 MRO—Movement Report Office.
 msg—Message.
 MSR—Main Supply Route.
 MSTs—Military Sea Transport Service.
 MTACS—Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron.
 MTBn—Motor Transport Battalion.
 NavBchGru—Naval Beach Group.
 NavFE—Naval Forces Far East.
 NCO—Noncommissioned Officer.
 NK—North Korea(n).
 NKPA—North Korean Peoples Army.
 N.d.—Date not given.
 N.t.—Time not given.
 O—Officer; Order.
 OCMH—Office of the Chief of Military History (USA).

- OI—Operation Instruction.
OpnO—Operation Order.
OpnPlan—Operation Plan.
OrdBn—Ordnance Battalion.
OY—Consolidated-Vultee Light Observation Plane.
PCEC—Escort Amphibious Control Vessel.
PF—Frigate.
PhibGru—Amphibious Group.
PIR—Periodic Intelligence Report.
PLA—People's Liberation Army.
Plat—Platoon.
POL—Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants.
POR—Periodic Operation Report.
POW—Prisoner of War.
QMPetDistCo—Quartermaster Petroleum Distribution Company (USA).
QMSubstSupCo—Quartermaster Subsistence Supply Company (USA).
R4D—Douglas Transport (Navy and Marine designation of C-47).
RCT—Regimental Combat Team.
Recon—Reconnaissance.
Reinf—Reinforced.
RktBn—Rocket Battalion.
RM—Royal Marines.
ROK—Republic of Korea.
R & O File—Records and Orders File.
ROKA—Republic of Korea Army.
ROKN—Republic of Korea Navy.
SAC—Supporting Arms Coordinator.
SAR—Special Action Report.
SCAJAP—Shipping Control Authority, Japan.
Sec—Section.
SecDef—Secretary of Defense.
ServBn—Service Battalion.
SigBn—Signal Battalion.
SigRepCo—Signal Repair Company.
SitRpt—Situation Report.
SP—Shore Party.
SMS—Marine Supply Squadron.
TAC—Tactical Air Coordinator; Tactical Air Commander.
TACP—Tactical Air Control Party.
Tacron—Tactical Air Control Squadron.
TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center.
T-AP—Transport Operated by MSTs.
TBM—General Motors "Avenger" Torpedo Bomber.
TE—Task Element.
T/E—Table of Equipment.
Tel—Telephone Message.
TF—Task Force.
TG—Task Group.
TkBn—Tank Battalion.
Trk—Truck.
T/O—Table of Organization.
TU—Task Unit.
UDT—Underwater Demolitions Team.
U/F—Unit of Fire.
UN—United Nations.
UNC—United Nations Command.
URpt—Unit Report.
USA—United States Army.
USAF—United States Air Force.
USMC—United States Marine Corps.
USN—United States Navy.
VMF—Marine Fighter Squadron.
VMF(N)—All-Weather, Fighter Squadron.
VMO—Marine Observation Squadron.
VMR—Marine Transport Squadron.
WD—War Diary.
WD Sum—War Diary Summary.
WIA—Wounded in Action.
YMS—Motor Minesweeper.

APPENDIX B

Task Organization 1st Marine Division

In order to present a true picture of the Task Organization of the 1st Marine Division during its operations in northeast Korea the organization will be presented for the following periods:

1. Wonsan Landing (OpnO 16-50)
2. Advance to the Reservoir (OpnO 19-50)
3. Movement south from Hagaru (OpnO 25-50)
4. Hungnam Evacuation (OpnO 27-50)

1. TASK ORGANIZATION OF 1ST MARINE DIVISION FOR WONSAN LANDING

<i>1st Marine Division, (Reinf), FMF</i>	MajGen O. P. SMITH
HqBn, 1stMarDiv, less dets	LtCol M. T. STARR
163rd MISD, USA	
441st CIC Det, USA	
1st SigBn, less dets	Maj R. L. SCHREIER
Carrier Plat, FMF	
Det, 4th SigBn, USA	
2d SigRepUnit, USA	
Det, 205th SigRepCo, USA	
1st ServBn, less dets	LtCol C. L. BANKS
1st MTBn	LtCol O. L. BEALL
1st OrdBn	Maj L. O. WILLIAMS
1st SPBn, less dets	LtCol H. P. CROWE
SPCommSec, 1stSigBn	
Det, 1st CSG	
Det, NavBchGru 1	
1st MedBn, less dets	Cdr H. B. JOHNSON, USN
2d Plat, 560thMedAmbCo, USA	
7th MTBn	Maj J. F. STEPKA
1st CSG, less dets	Col. J. S. COOK
1st Fum&BathPlat, FMF	
1st AirDelPlat, FMF	
Plat, 20th QMSubsistSupCo, USA	
Plat, 506th QMPetDisCo, USA	
NavBchGru 1, less dets	
<i>Regimental Combat Team 1</i>	Col L. B. PULLER
1st Marines	
Det, 5th KMC Bn	

Regimental Combat Team 1—Continued

Co C, 1st EngrBn
 Co C, 1st MTBn
 Co D, 1st MedBn
 Plat, 1stArmdAmphBn
 Det, 1stSigBn
 FO & LnO Secs, 2/11
 LnDet, 1stTkBn
 SP Gru B
 Det, MP Co
 Det, 1st CSG
 Det, NavBchGru 1

Regimental Combat Team 5

LtCol R. L. MURRAY

5th Marines
 Co A, 1st EngrBn
 Co D, 1st MTBn
 Co C, 1st MedBn
 Det, 1st SigBn
 FO & LnO Secs, 1/11
 SP Gru A
 Det, MP Co
 Det, 1st CSG
 Det, NavBchGru 1

Regimental Combat Team 7

Col H. L. LITZENBERG

7th Marines
 Det, 3d KMC Bn
 Co D, 1st EngrBn
 Co B, 1st MTBn
 Co D, 1st MedBn
 Plat, 1stArmdAmphBn
 Det, 1st SigBn
 FO & LnO Secs, 3/11
 LnDet, 1st TkBn
 SP Gru C
 Det, MP Co
 Det, 1st CSG
 Det, NavBchGru 1

11th Marines, Reinf

Col J. H. BROWER

Btry C, 1st 4.5" RktBn
 1st AmphTrkCo, FMF

1st Tank Battalion, less dets

LtCol H. T. MILNE

<i>1st Engineer Battalion</i> , less dets	LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE
<i>3d KMC Battalion</i> , less dets	Maj KIM YUN GUN
<i>5th KMC Battalion</i> , less dets	Col KIM TAI SHIK
<i>1st AmphTracBn</i> , FMF	LtCol E. F. WANN
<i>Reconnaissance Company</i> , 1stMar Div	1stLt R. B. CROSSMAN
VMO-6	Maj V. J. GOTTSCHALK

2. TASK ORGANIZATION FOR ADVANCE TO THE RESERVOIR

1st Marine Division, Reinf, FMF MajGen O. P. SMITH

- HqBn, less dets
- 163d MISD
- 441st CIC Det
- 1stSigBn, Reinf, less dets
- 1stServBn, Reinf, less dets
- Co A, 7th MTBn (less 1 plat)
- Det, 1st MTBn
- 1st OrdBn
- 1stMedBn, less dets
- 1st AmphTracBn
- Co B, 1st ArmdAmphBn (less
1st Plat)
- 7th MT Bn, less dets
- 1st CSG, Reinf
- 1st AmphTrkCo
- 1st AirDelPlat
- 1st Fum&Bath Plat

Regimental Combat Team 1 Col L. B. PULLER

- 1st Marines
- 2/11
- Co D, 1st MedBn
- Co C, 1st TkBn
- Co C, Reinf, 1st EngrBn
- Det, 1stSigBn
- Det, 1stServBn
- Det, MP Co

Regimental Combat Team 7 Col H. L. LITZENBERG

- 7th Marines
- 3/11
- Recon Co, 1stMarDiv

Regimental Combat Team 7—Continued

1st MTBn, less dets
 Co D, Reinf, 1st EngrBn
 Co E, 1st MedBn
 Det, 1st SigBn
 Det, MP Co
 Det, 1st ServBn

Regimental Combat Team 5

LtCol R. L. MURRAY

5th Marines
 1/11
 Co A, Reinf, 1st EngrBn
 Co C, 1st MedBn
 Co, 1st MTBn
 Det, 1st SigBn
 Det, MP Co
 Det, 1st ServBn

11th Marines, Reinf, less dets

Col J. H. BROWER

Btry C, 1st 4.5" RktBn

1st Tank Battalion, Reinf, less dets

LtCol H. T. MILNE

Tk Plat, 5th Mar
 Tk Plat, 7th Mar

1st Engineer Battalion, less dets
VMO-6

LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE
 Maj V. J. GOTTSCHALK

3. TASK ORGANIZATION FOR MOVEMENT SOUTH FROM HAGARU

(Except where noted the organization remained the same for the movement south from Koto-ri.)

1st Marine Division, Reinf, FMF

MajGen O. P. SMITH

HqBn, Reinf, less dets
 163d MISD
 181st CIC
 1st SigBn, Reinf, less dets
 1st ServBn, Reinf, less dets
 Co A, 7th MTBn, less dets
 AutoSup Co, 1st MTBn
 AutoMaint Co, 1st MTBn
 1st OrdBn, less dets
 1st MedBn, Reinf, less dets
 1st Fum&Bath Plat
 2d Plat, 506th MedAmbCo, USA
 (under opn control X Corps)
 1st AmphTracBn, Reinf, less dets

1st Marine Division, Reinf, FMF—Continued

- 1st CSG, Reinf
 7thMTBn, less dets
 Co A, 1stAmphTracBn
 1st AirDel Plat
 1stSPBn (under opn control 3dInfDiv)
 1stTkBn, less dets
 VMO-6
- Regimental Combat Team 5*
 LtCol R. L. MURRAY
 5th Marines, less Tk Plat
 1/11
 Btry D, 2/11 (released to RCT 1 on passage through Koto-ri)
 11th Marines, Reinf, less dets
 4/11, less Btry L
 Det, 96th FABn, USA
 3/1 (released to RCT 1 on passage through Koto-ri)
 Det, 1stSigBn
 Tk Co, 31st Inf, USA
 Prov Plat, 1stTkBn
 Co A, 1stEngrBn (released to RCT 1 on passage through Koto-ri)
 Det, 1stEngrBn
 41 Commando, RM
 Division Train 2
 Traffic Plat, MP Co
 Det, 513th TrkCo, USA
 Det, 1stMTBn
 Co D, 10thEngr(C)Bn, USA
 Det, 1stMedBn
 Det, 1stServBn
 Det, 1stSigBn
 Det, 515th Trk Co, USA
- Regimental Combat Team 7*
 Col H. L. LITZENBERG
 7th Marines, less Tk Plat
 3/11
 Btry L, 4/11 (released to RCT 1 on arrival Koto-ri)
 ProvBn, 31st Inf, USA
 Det, 1stSigBn
 Co D, 1stTkBn
 Co D, Reinf, 1stEngrBn
 Division Train 1
 Det, HqBn, 1stMarDiv
 LtCol C. L. BANKS

Regimental Combat Team 7—Continued

Det, Hq X Corps
 Det, 1stServBn
 Det, 1stOrdBn
 Det, 7thMTBn
 Det, X Corps Ord Co, USA
 MP Co, 1stMarDiv, less dets
 1stMTBn, less dets
 Det, 1stSigBn
 AirSptSec, MTACS-2
 Det, 1stMedBn

Regimental Combat Team 1

Col L. B. PULLER

1st Marines, less 3/1 and
 Tk Plat
 2/31, Reinf, USA
 2/11, less Btry D
 Btry L, 4/11
 Cos A & B, 7thMTBn
 Co C, Reinf, 1stMTBn
 Det, 1stSigBn
 Det, 1stServBn
 Det, HqBn, 1stMarDiv
 Det, 1stOrdBn
 Cos B & D, 1stMedBn
 Recon Co, 1stMarDiv
 Det, 1stEngr Bn
 Det, 7thMar
 Det, 41 Commando, RM

 Co B, Reinf, 1stTkBn
 Misc elms, USA

(Btry D attached on passage Koto-ri)
 (Btry L attached on arrival Koto-ri)

(released to 41 Commando on passage
 Koto-ri by RCT 5)

4. TASK ORGANIZATION FOR HUNGNAM EVACUATION

Forward Echelon

BrigGen E. A. CRAIG

Main Body, 1st Marine Division,

MajGen O. P. SMITH

*Reinf, FMF, less dets**Regimental Combat Team 7*

Col H. L. LITZENBERG

7th Marines, less Tk Plat
 3/11
 Co D, 1stEngrBn
 1st CSG, less dets
 Det, HqBn

Regimental Combat Team 7—Continued

1stServBn
 Co A, 7th MTBn
 Det, 1stSigBn
 1stMedBn, Reinf
 1st Fum&Bath Plat

Regimental Combat Team 5

LtCol R. L. MURRAY

5th Marines
 1/11
 41 Commando, RM
 Co A, 1stEngrBn
 1stOrdBn
 1stMTBn
 Det, 1stSigBn

Regimental Combat Team 1

Col L. B. PULLER

1st Marines
 2/11
 Co C, 1stEngrBn
 1stTkBn
 Tk Plat, 5th Mar
 Tk Plat, 7th Mar
 Det, 1stSigBn

HqBn, Reinf, less dets

LtCol M. T. STARR

1stSigBn, less dets
 163d MISD, USA
 181st CIC Det, USA

11th Marines, Reinf, less dets

LtCol C. A. YOUNGDALE

Btry C, 1st 4.5" RktBn
 1st EngrBn, less dets
 7thMTBn, less dets
 ANGLICO, 1stSigBn

1stSPBn, less dets

LtCol H. P. CROWE

1stAmphTracBn, Reinf, FMF

LtCol E. F. WANN

Co A, Reinf, 1stAmphTrkBn,
 FMF
 Co B, 1stArmdAmphBn, FMF

APPENDIX C

Naval Task Organization

1. *Wonsan Landing*

JTF 7

TF 90 Attack Force

TG 91.2 Landing Force (1st
MarDiv)

TE 90.00 Flagship Element
Mount McKinley 1 AGC

TE 90.01 Tactical Air Control
Element Cdr T. H. Moore

TU 90.01.1 TacRon 1

TU 90.01.2 TacRon 3

TE 90.02 Naval Beach Group
Element Capt W. T. Singer

TU 90.02.1 Headquarters Unit

TU 90.02.2 Beachmaster Unit LCdr M. C. Sibisky

TU 90.02.3 Boat Unit One LCdr H. E. Hock

TU 90.02.4 Amphibious Con-
struction Bn. Lcdr M. T. Jacobs, Jr.

TU 90.02.5 Underwater
Demolitions Team Unit LCdr W. R. McKinney

TG 90.1 Administrative Group RAdm L. A. Thackery

TE 90.10 Flagship Element
Eldorado 1 AGC Capt J. B. Stefonek

TU 90.1.1 Medical Unit

Consolation 1 AH

*LST 898**

*LST 975** 2 LST

TU 90.1.2 Repair and Salvage
Unit Capt P. W. Mothersill

Lipan

Cree

Arikara 3 ATF

Conserver 1 ARS

Askari 1 ARL

Gunston Hall

Fort Marion

Comstock

Catamount

Colonial 5 LSD

Plus other units as assigned

TU 90.1.3 Service Unit LCdr J. D. Johnston

15 LSU

1. *Wonsan Landing*—Continued

TG 90.2 Transport Group Capt V. R. Roane

TE 90.21 Transport Division Capt S. G. Kelly
ABLE*Bayfield**Noble**Cavalier**Okanogan* 4 APA*Washburn**Seminole**Titania**Oglethorpe**Archenar* 5 AKA*Marine Phoenix* 1 T-APTE 90.22 Transport Division Capt A. E. Jarrell
BAKER*Henrico**George Clymer**Pickaway**Bexar* 4 APA*Union**Algol**Alsheim**Winston**Montague* 5 AKA*Aiken Victory* 1 T-AP*Robin Goodfellow*

1 Commercial freighter

TG 90.3 Tractor Group Capt R. C. Peden

*Gunston Hall****Fort Marion****Comstock****Catamount****Colonial*** 5 LSD*LST 1123**LST 715**LST 742**LST 799**LST 802**LST 845**LST 883**LST 898**LST 914**LST 973**LST 975**LST 1048* 12 LST

23 SCAJAP LSTs 23 LST

1. *Wonsan Landing*—Continued
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------|
| TG 90.4 Control Group | | LCdr C. Allmon |
| <i>PCEC 896</i> | 1 PCEC | |
| TU 90.4.1 Control Unit | | Lt S. C. Pinksen |
| BLUE | | |
| <i>Wantuck</i> | 1 APD | |
| TU 90.4.2 Control Unit | | Lt A. C. Ansgorge |
| YELLOW | | |
| <i>Horace A. Bass</i> | 1 APD | |
| TG 95.6 Minesweeping and Protection Group | | Capt R. T. Spofford |
| <i>Collett</i> | 1 DD | |
| <i>Diachenko</i> | 1 APD | |
| <i>Doyle</i> | | |
| <i>Endicott</i> | 2 DMS | |
| <i>Pledge</i> | | |
| <i>Incredible</i> | 2 AM | |
| <i>Kite</i> | | |
| <i>Merganser</i> | | |
| <i>Mockingbird</i> | | |
| <i>Osprey</i> | | |
| <i>Redhead</i> | | |
| <i>Chatterer</i> | 7 AMS | |
| HMS <i>Mounts Bay</i> | | |
| HMNZS <i>Pukaki</i> | | |
| HMNZS <i>Putira</i> | | |
| <i>LaGrandiere</i> (French) | 4 PF | |
| 8 Japanese mine sweepers | | |
| 4 Japanese mine destruction and buoying vessels | | |
| 1 ROKN | 1 AKL | |
| Plus other units assigned | | |
| TG 90.6 Reconnaissance Group | | Cdr S. C. Small |
| <i>Horace A. Bass</i> | | |
| <i>Wantuck</i> | 2 APD | |
| UDT 1 | | |
| UDT 3 | 2 UDT | |
| TG 96.8 Escort Carrier Group | | RAdm R. W. Ruble |
| <i>Badoeng Strait</i> | | |
| <i>Sicily</i> | 2 CVE | |
| <i>Taussig</i> | | |
| <i>Hanson</i> | | |
| <i>George K. Mackenzie</i> | | |
| <i>Ernest G. Small</i> | | |
| <i>Southerland</i> | | |
| <i>Rowan</i> | 6 DD | |

1. *Wonsan Landing*—Continued

TG 95.2 Gunfire Support Group		RAdm G. R. Hartman
<i>Helena</i>		
<i>Rochester</i>		
<i>Toledo</i>	3 CA	
<i>HMS Ceylon</i>	1 CL	
<i>HMS Cockade</i>		
<i>HMCS Athabaskan</i>		
<i>HMAS Warramunga</i>		
3 DD of DesRon 9	6 DD	
LSMR 401***		
LSMR 403***		
LSMR 404***		

* Reported to CTG 95.2 upon arrival at objective area.

** Carrying 3 LSU.

***Reported to CTF 90 when released by CTG 95.2.

2. *Hungnam Evacuation*

TF 90 Amphibious Force, Naval Forces Far East		RAdm J. H. Doyle
TE 90.00 Flagship Element		
<i>Mount McKinley</i>		
TE 90.01 Tactical Air Control Element		Cdr R. W. Arndt
TacRon ONE		
TE 90.02 Repair and Salvage Unit		Cdr L. C. Conwell
<i>Kermit Roosevelt</i>	ARG	
<i>Askari</i>	ARL	
<i>Bolster</i>		
<i>Conserver</i>	2 ARS	
<i>Tawakoni</i>	ATF	
TE 90.03 Control Element		LCdr C. Allmon
<i>Diachenko</i>		
<i>Begor</i>	2 APD	
PCEC 882	PCEC	
TG 90.2 Transport Group		Capt S. G. Kelly
TE 90.21 Transport Element		Capt A. E. Jarrell
<i>Bayfield</i>		
<i>Henrico</i>		
<i>Noble</i>	3 APA	
<i>Winston</i>		
<i>Seminole</i>		
<i>Montague</i>	3 AKA	
<i>Begor</i>		
<i>Diachenko</i>	2 APD	
PCEC 882	PCEC	

2. Hungnam Evacuation—Continued

*Fort Marion**

*Colonial**

*Calamount** 3 LSD

*3 LSU embarked

LST 742

LST 715

LST 845

LST 802

LST 883

LST 799

LST 898

LST 914

LST 975

LST 973

LST 1048 11 LST

TG 90.8 Gunfire Support Group RAdm R. H. Hillenkoetter

St. Paul

Rochester 2 CA

Zellers

Charles S. Sperry

Massey

Forrest Royal 4 DD

LSMR 401

LSMR 403

LSMR 404 3 LSMR

Plus DD as assigned from TG 95.2

TG 95.2 Blockade, Escort and RAdm J. M. Higgins

Minesweeping Group

Rochester CA

English

Hank

Wallace L. Lind

Borie 4 DD

Sausalito

Hoquiam

Gallup

Gloucester

Bisbee

Glendale 6 PF

TG 95.6 Minesweeping Group Capt R. T. Spofford

Endicott

Doyle 2 DMS

Incredible AM

Curlew

Heron 2 AMS

2. *Hungnam Evacuation*—Continued

TG 96.8 Escort Carrier Group RAdm R. W. Ruble

*Badoeng Strait**Sicily* 2 CVE*Bataan* CVL*Lofberg**John A. Bole**Mackenzie**Taussig**Ernest G. Small**Brinkley Bass**Arnold J. Isbell* 7 DD*Hanson* DDR

Vessels attached TF 90 for operational control.

Missouri BB*Duncan* DDR (from 10 Dec)*Foss* DE (from 9 Dec)*Consolation*
AH (from 2 Dec)

APPENDIX D

Effective Strength of
1st Marine Division¹

Date	Organic USMC and USN	Attached U. S. Army	Attached Royal Marines	Attached KMC	Total
8 Oct 50-----	23,533	78	0	2,159	25,770
26 Oct 50-----	23,608	83	0	1,588	25,279
27 Nov 50-----	25,166	73	234	0	25,473
5 Dec 50-----	21,551	2,535	157	0	24,243
8 Dec 50-----	21,039	2,448	157	0	23,644
15 Dec 50-----	19,362	14	144	0	19,520

¹ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex A (G-1), 4.

APPENDIX E

1st Marine Division Casualties¹

Date	KIA	DOW	MIA	WIA	Non-battle casualties
8Oct50					21
9Oct50					12
10Oct50					11
11Oct50					35
12Oct50					23
13Oct50					5
14Oct50					5
15Oct50					4
16Oct50					3
17Oct50					5
18Oct50					2
19Oct50					1
20Oct50					4
21Oct50					1
22Oct50					2
23Oct50					1
24Oct50					5
25Oct50					12
26Oct50					43
27Oct50	22		4	44	54
28Oct50	1			3	68
29Oct50					115
30Oct50	1			5	52
31Oct50					36
1Nov50					29
2Nov50	22	2		67	64
3Nov50	22	3	1	162	93
4Nov50	17	4		84	126
5Nov50	1	1		23	94
6Nov50	5	1		38	87
7Nov50	15			60	51
8Nov50	1	2		17	50
9Nov50	2			7	50
10Nov50	3			20	57
11Nov50	8			16	48
12Nov50	2			4	40
13Nov50	7			9	63
14Nov50					66
15Nov50				1	172
16Nov50	1			2	136
17Nov50				2	77
18Nov50					79
19Nov50				1	58
20Nov50					46
21Nov50	4			5	63
22Nov50					65
23Nov50	1			3	58
24Nov50	3			8	51
25Nov50				8	55
26Nov50	2		1	5	68

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Date	KIA	DOW	MIA	WIA	Non-battle casualties
27Nov50	37	1	17	186	96
28Nov50	95	3	43	539	259
29Nov50	60	14	42	396	105
30Nov50	27	6	6	183	102
1Dec50	27	14	6	111	134
2Dec50	55	2	33	231	180
3Dec50	16	1	6	194	196
4Dec50	10	6	4	202	582
5Dec50	2	7	2	81	469
6Dec50	32	4	7	212	262
7Dec50	51	16		281	304
8Dec50	29	8	4	127	170
9Dec50	6	7	1	46	224
10Dec50	7	5	8	45	266
11Dec50	9	4	3	38	308
12Dec50		2	4	3	123
13Dec50				1	52
14Dec50					103
15Dec50		1			34
16Dec50					90
17Dec50				1	105
18Dec50					282
19Dec50					202
20Dec50					151
21Dec50				1	111
22Dec50					68
23Dec50				3	79
24Dec50	1			10	42
Total	604	114	192	3,485	7,338

¹ 1stMarDiv SAR, annex E, appendix 2 (Casualty Reporting Section, 12Jan51); Smith, *Notes*, 1147-1149.

APPENDIX F

Command and Staff List

8 October—15 December 1950

1ST MARINE DIVISION

Commanding General	MajGen Oliver P. Smith
Assistant Division Commander	BrigGen Edward A. Craig
Chief of Staff	Col Gregon A. Williams
Deputy Chief of Staff	Col Edward W. Snedeker
G-1	Col Harvey S. Walseth (to 28 Nov) LtCol Bryghte D. Godbold
G-2	Col Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr.
G-3	Col Alpha L. Bowser, Jr.
G-4	Col Francis A. McAlister

Special Staff

Adjutant	Maj Philip J. Costello
Air Officer	Maj James N. Cupp
Artillery Officer	Col James H. Brower (to 30 Nov) LtCol Carl A. Youngdale
Amphibian Tractor Officer	LtCol Erwin F. Wann, Jr.
Armored Amphibian Officer	LtCol Francis H. Cooper
Chaplain	Cdr Robert H. Schwyhart (ChC), USN
Chemical Warfare and Radiological Defense Officer	Maj John H. Blue
Dental Officer	Capt Mack Meradith (DC), USN
Embarkation Officer	Maj Jules M. Rouse
Engineer Officer	LtCol John H. Partridge
Exchange Officer	Capt Wilbur C. Conley
Food Director	Maj Norman R. Nickerson
Inspector	Col John A. White
Historical Officer	2dLt John M. Patrick
Legal Officer	LtCol Albert H. Schierman
Motor Transport Officer	Maj Henry W. Seeley
Naval Gunfire Officer	LtCol Loren S. Fraser
Ordnance Officer	Capt Donald L. Shenaut
Provost Marshal	Capt John H. Griffin
Public Information Officer	Capt Michael C. Capraro (to 6 Nov) Maj Carl E. Stahley
Shore Party Officer	LtCol Henry P. Crowe
Signal Officer	LtCol Albert Creal
Special Services Officer	Capt Raymond H. Spuhler (to 29 Nov) LtCol John M. Bathum

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Supply Officer Col Gordon S. Hendricks
 Surgeon Capt Eugene R. Hering (MC), USN
 Tank Officer LtCol Harry T. Milne

Attached Units

Commanding Officer, 163d Military
 Intelligence Specialist Detachment,
 USA Capt Fujio F. Asano, USA
 Commanding Officer, 181st Counter
 Intelligence Corps Detachment,
 USA Maj Millard E. Dougherty, USA
 Commanding Officer, 41st
 Independent Commando,
 Royal Marines LtCol Douglas B. Drysdale, RM

Headquarters Battalion

Commanding Officer LtCol Marvin T. Starr
 Commanding Officer,
 Headquarters Company Maj Frederick Simpson
 Commanding Officer,
 Military Police Company Capt John H. Griffin
 Commanding Officer,
 Reconnaissance Company 1stLt Ralph B. Crossman (to 23 Nov)
 Maj Walter Gall

1st Marines

Commanding Officer Col Lewis B. Puller
 Executive Officer LtCol Robert W. Rickert
 S-1 Capt William G. Reeves
 S-2 Capt Stone W. Quillian
 S-3 Maj Robert E. Lorigan
 S-4 Maj Thomas T. Grady
 Commanding Officer,
 Headquarters Company Capt Frank P. Tatum
 Commanding Officer, 4.2-inch
 Mortar Company Capt Frank J. Faureck
 Commanding Officer, Antitank
 Company Capt George E. Petro

1st Battalion, 1st Marines

Commanding Officer LtCol Jack Hawkins (to 7 Nov)
 LtCol Donald M. Schmuck
 Executive Officer Maj Maurice H. Clarke
 Commanding Officer, Headquarters and
 Service Company Capt William B. Hopkins
 Commanding Officer, A Company .. Capt Robert H. Barrow
 Commanding Officer, B Company .. Capt Wesley Noren

Commanding Officer, C Company . . . Capt Robert P. Wray
 Commanding Officer, Weapons
 Company Maj William T. Bates, Jr.

2d Battalion, 1st Marines

Commanding Officer LtCol Allan Suttter
 Executive Officer Maj Clarence J. Mabry
 Commanding Officer, Headquarters
 and Service Company Capt Raymond Dewees, Jr.
 Commanding Officer, D Company . . . Capt Welby W. Cronk
 Commanding Officer, E Company . . . Capt Charles D. Frederick (to 6 Nov)
 1stLt Harold B. Wilson (6-17 Nov)
 Capt Jack A. Smith
 Commanding Officer, F Company . . . Capt Goodwin C. Groff
 Commanding Officer, Weapons
 Company Maj Whitman S. Bartley (to 16 Nov)
 Capt William A. Kerr

3d Battalion, 1st Marines

Commanding Officer LtCol Thomas L. Ridge
 Executive Officer Maj Reginald R. Myers
 Commanding Officer, Headquarters
 and Service Company Capt Thomas E. McCarthy
 Commanding Officer, G Company . . . Capt George C. Westover (to 30 Oct)
 Capt Carl L. Sitter
 Commanding Officer, H Company . . . Capt Clarence E. Corley
 Commanding Officer, I Company . . . 1stLt Joseph R. Fisher
 Commanding Officer, Weapons
 Company Maj Edwin H. Simmons

5th Marines

Commanding Officer LtCol Raymond L. Murray
 Executive Officer LtCol Joseph L. Stewart
 S-1 1stLt Alton C. Weed
 S-2 Maj William C. Easterline
 S-3 Maj Theodore J. Spiker
 S-4 Maj Harold Wallace
 Commanding Officer, Headquarters
 and Service Company Capt Harold G. Schrier (to 9 Oct)
 Capt Jack E. Hawthorn
 Commanding Officer, 4.2-inch
 Mortar Company 1stLt Robert M. Lucy
 Commanding Officer, Antitank
 Company 1stLt Almarion S. Bailey

1st Battalion, 5th Marines

Commanding Officer LtCol George R. Newton (to 17 Nov)
 LtCol John W. Stevens, II

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Executive Officer	Maj Merlin R. Olson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company	Capt Walter E. G. Godenius
Commanding Officer, A Company ...	Capt John R. Stevens (to 17 Nov) Capt James B. Heater
Commanding Officer, B Company ...	Capt Francis I. Fenton (to 13 Oct) 1stLt John R. Hancock
Commanding Officer, C Company ...	1stLt Poul F. Pedersen (to 6 Nov) Capt Jack R. Jones
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company	Maj John W. Russell

2d Battalion, 5th Marines

Commanding Officer	LtCol Harold S. Roise
Executive Officer	LtCol John W. Stevens, II (to 12 Nov) Maj Glen E. Martin (13-21 Nov) Maj John L. Hopkins
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company	1stLt David W. Walsh (to 8 Oct) Capt Franklin B. Mayer
Commanding Officer, D Company ...	Capt Samuel S. Smith
Commanding Officer, E Company ...	Capt Samuel Jaskilka (to 12 Dec) Capt Lawrence W. Henke, Jr.
Commanding Officer, F Company ...	Capt Uel D. Peters (to 6 Dec) 1stLt Charles "H" Dalton
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company	Maj James W. Bateman (to 10 Oct) Maj Glen E. Martin (11 Oct-12 Nov) Maj James W. Bateman (13-21 Nov) Maj Glen E. Martin

3d Battalion, 5th Marines

Commanding Officer	LtCol Robert D. Taplett
Executive Officer	Maj John J. Canney (to 28 Nov) Maj Harold W. Swain
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company	Capt Roland A. Marbaugh (to 4 Dec) Capt Raymond H. Spuhler
Commanding Officer, G Company ...	1stLt Charles D. Mize (to 17 Nov) Capt Chester R. Hermanson (18 Nov- 2 Dec) 1stLt Charles D. Mize
Commanding Officer, H Company ...	1stLt Donald E. Watterson (to 8 Nov) Capt Harold B. Williamson
Commanding Officer, I Company ...	Capt Harold G. Schrier

Commanding Officer, Weapons
Company Maj Murray Ehrlich (to 18 Nov)
Maj Harold W. Swain (19-28 Nov)
1stLt Hubert J. Shovlin

7th Marines

Commanding Officer Col Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr.
Executive Officer LtCol Frederick R. Dowsett (to 7 Dec)

..... LtCol Raymond G. Davis
S-1 Capt John R. Grove
S-2 Capt Donald R. France (to 6 Dec)
S-3 Maj Henry J. Woessner, II
S-4 Maj David L. Mell (to 22 Nov)
Maj Maurice E. Roach

Commanding Officer, Headquarters
and Service Company Capt Nicholas L. Shields (to 3 Dec)
Maj Walter T. Warren (4-7 Dec)¹
Maj Rodney V. Reigard²

Commanding Officer, 4.2-inch
Mortar Company Maj Stanley D. Low (to 2 Nov)
1stLt Gordon Vincent (3-18 Nov)
Maj Rodney V. Reigard

Commanding Officer, Antitank
Company 1stLt Earl R. DeLong (to 20 Oct)
Maj Walter T. Warren (21 Oct-8 Dec)
1stLt Earl R. DeLong

1st Battalion, 7th Marines

Commanding Officer LtCol Raymond G. Davis (to 7 Dec)
Maj Webb D. Sawyer

Executive Officer Maj Raymond V. Fridrich

Commanding Officer, Headquarters
and Service Company Capt Elmer L. Starr (to 22 Nov)
1stLt Wilbert R. Gaul

Commanding Officer, A Company ... Capt David W. Banks (to 20 Nov)
1stLt Eugenous M. Hovatter

Commanding Officer, B Company ... Capt Myron E. Wilcox, Jr. (to 27 Nov)
1stLt Joseph R. Kurcaba (27 Nov-
8-Dec)

1stLt William W. Taylor
Commanding Officer, C Company ... Capt William E. Shea (to 16 Nov)
Capt John F. Morris

Commanding Officer, Weapons
Company Maj William E. Vorhies

¹ Additional duty.

² Additional duty.

*The Ghosin Reservoir Campaign**2d Battalion, 7th Marines*

Commanding Officer	Maj Webb D. Sawyer (to 9 Nov) LtCol Randolph S. D. Lockwood
Executive Officer	Maj Roland E. Carey (to 9 Nov) Maj Webb D. Sawyer (10 Nov-8 Dec) Maj James F. Lawrence, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company	Capt Walter R. Anderson
Commanding Officer, D Company ...	Capt Milton A. Hull (to 28 Nov) 1stLt James D. Hammond, Jr.
Commanding Officer, E Company ...	Capt Walter D. Phillips, Jr. (to 28 Nov) 1stLt Raymond O. Ball (28 Nov) 1stLt Robert T. Bey
Commanding Officer, F Company ...	Capt Elmer J. Zorn (to 6 Nov) Capt William E. Barber (7 Nov-3 Dec) 1stLt John M. Dunne (3-6 Dec) 1stLt Welton R. Abell
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company	Capt Harry L. Givens, Jr. (to 12 Nov) Maj Joseph L. Abel (13-19 Nov) Capt Harry L. Givens, Jr.

3d Battalion, 7th Marines

Commanding Officer	Maj Maurice E. Roach (to 10 Nov) LtCol William F. Harris (11 Nov- 6 Dec) Maj Warren Morris
Executive Officer	Maj Warren Morris (to 6 Dec) Maj Jefferson D. Smith, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company	Capt Eric R. Haars (to 29 Nov)
Commanding Officer, G Company ...	Capt Thomas E. Cooney (to 27 Nov) Capt Eric R. Haars (29 Nov-3 Dec) 1stLt George R. Earnest
Commanding Officer, H Company ...	1stLt Howard H. Harris (to 11 Nov) Capt Leroy M. Cooke (12-27 Nov) 1stLt Howard H. Harris (27 Nov- 1 Dec) 1stLt Harold J. Fitzgeorge (1-5 Dec) 2dLt Minard P. Newton
Commanding Officer, I Company ...	Capt Richard H. Sengewald (to 14 Oct) 1stLt William E. Johnson (15 Oct- 3 Dec) 1stLt Alfred I. Thomas

- Commanding Officer, Weapons
Company Maj Jefferson D. Smith (to 5 Dec)
1stLt Austin S. Parker (6-10 Dec)
1stLt Robert E. Hill
- 11th Marines*
- Commanding Officer Col James H. Brower (to 30 Nov)
LtCol Carl A. Youngdale
- Executive Officer LtCol Carl A. Youngdale (to 30 Nov)
- S-1 Maj Floyd M. McCorkle
- S-2 Capt William T. Phillips
- S-3 LtCol James O. Appleyard
- S-4 Maj Donald V. Anderson
- Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Battery Capt Albert H. Wunderly (to 7 Nov)
Capt Clarence E. Hixson (15-25 Nov)
1stLt William C. Patton
- Commanding Officer,
Service Battery Maj Donald V. Anderson (to 16 Nov)
1stLt Joseph M. Brent
- Commanding Officer,
Battery C, 1st 4.5-inch
Rocket Battalion 1stLt Eugene A. Bushe
- 1st Battalion, 11th Marines*
- Commanding Officer LtCol Ransom M. Wood (to 15 Nov)
LtCol Harvey A. Feehan
- Executive Officer Maj Francis R. Schlesinger
- Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Battery Capt James W. Brayshay (to 25 Nov)
- Commanding Officer, Service Battery .. 1stLt Kenneth H. Quelch
- Commanding Officer, A Battery Capt James D. Jordan
- Commanding Officer, B Battery Capt Arnold C. Hoffstetter (to 8 Oct)
Capt Gilbert N. Powell
- Commanding Officer, C Battery Capt William J. Nichols, Jr.
- 2d Battalion, 11th Marines*
- Commanding Officer LtCol Merritt Adelman
- Executive Officer Maj Donald E. Noll (to 25 Oct)
Maj Neal G. Newell
- Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Battery Capt George J. Batson
- Commanding Officer, Service Battery .. Capt Herbert R. Merrick, Jr.
- Commanding Officer, D Battery Capt Andrew J. Strohmenger (to 8 Dec)
Capt Richard E. Roach
- Commanding Officer, E Battery Capt John C. McClelland, Jr.
- Commanding Officer, F Battery Capt George J. Kovich, Jr. (to 19 Nov)
1stLt Howard A. Blancheri

*The Chosin Reservoir Campaign**3d Battalion, 11th Marines*

Commanding Officer	Maj Francis F. Parry
Executive Officer	Maj Norman A. Miller, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery	1stLt Michael B. Weir (to 11 Nov) 1stLt Eugene H. Brown (12-18 Nov) 1stLt John J. Brackett
Commanding Officer, Service Battery ..	Capt Robert A. Thompson (to 17 Oct) Capt Ernest W. Payne (18 Oct-30 Nov) Capt Samuel A. Hannah
Commanding Officer, G Battery	Capt Samuel A. Hannah (to 30 Nov) Capt Ernest W. Payne
Commanding Officer, H Battery	Capt Benjamin S. Read (to 8 Dec) 1stLt Wilber N. Herndon
Commanding Officer, I Battery	Capt John M. McLaurin, Jr. (to 30 Nov) Capt Robert T. Patterson

4th Battalion, 11th Marines

Commanding Officer	Maj William McReynolds
Executive Officer	Maj Thomas M. Coggins (to 8 Nov) Maj Maurice J. Coffey
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery	Capt Charles S. Cummings (to 25 Oct) Capt Paul L. Hirt
Commanding Officer, Service Battery ..	Capt Armand G. Daddazio
Commanding Officer, K Battery	1stLt Robert C. Messman (to 27 Nov) 1stLt Robert C. Parrott (28 Nov- 11 Dec) Capt Arthur D. Challacombe
Commanding Officer, L Battery	Capt Lawrence R. Cloern
Commanding Officer, M Battery	Capt Vernon W. Shapiro

1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Commanding Officer	LtCol Erwin F. Wann, Jr.
Executive Officer	Maj Arthur J. Barrett
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company	Capt Frank E. Granucci
Commanding Officer, A Company ..	Maj James P. Treadwell
Commanding Officer, B Company ..	Capt Russell Hamlet
Commanding Officer, C Company ..	Maj Arthur J. Noonan

1st Armored Amphibian Battalion

Commanding Officer	LtCol Francis H. Cooper
Executive Officer	Maj Richard G. Warga
Commanding Officer, Headquarter Company	Capt Roger B. Thompson

Commanding Officer,
Service Company Capt Rex Z. Michael, Jr.
Commanding Officer, A Company ... Capt Bernard G. Thobe
Commanding Officer, B Company ... Capt Lewis E. Bolts

1st Combat Service Group

Commanding Officer Col John H. Cook, Jr.
Executive Officer LtCol Edward A. Clark
Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Company Capt Francis L. Miller
Commanding Officer,
Maintenance Company Maj Edward H. Voorhees
Commanding Officer,
Supply Company Maj Robert W. Hengesback
Commanding Officer,
Support Company Maj Donald B. Cooley, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Truck Company . Capt John A. Pearson (to 11 Nov)
2dLt Alan G. Copp (11-30 Nov)
Capt Jack W. Temple
Commanding Officer, 1st Fumigation
and Bath Company 1stLt James L. Dumas
Commanding Officer, 1st Air Delivery
Platoon Capt Hersel D. C. Blasingame

1st Engineer Battalion

Commanding Officer LtCol John H. Partridge
Executive Officer Maj Richard M. Elliott
Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Company Capt James H. McRoberts (to 20 Nov)
Maj Hewitt A. Snow
Capt Edward B. Newton
Commanding Officer,
Service Company Maj James W. McIllwain (to 22 Nov)
Capt Philip A. Terrell, Jr.
Commanding Officer, A Company ... Capt George W. King (to 2 Dec)
Capt William R. Gould
Commanding Officer, B Company .. Capt Orville L. Bibb
Commanding Officer, C Company ... Capt Lester G. Harmon (to 12 Nov)
1stLt Ronald L. Glendinning
Commanding Officer, D Company ... Capt Byron C. Turner

1st Medical Battalion

Commanding Officer Cdr Howard A. Johnson, USN
Executive Officer Cdr William S. Francis, USN
Commanding Officer, Headquarters
and Service Company Cdr William S. Francis, USN

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Commanding Officer, A Company	Cdr Byron E. Bassham, USN
Commanding Officer, B Company	LCdr James A. Kaufman, USN
Commanding Officer, C Company	Cdr Harold A. Streit, USN
Commanding Officer, D Company	LCdr Gustave J. Anderson, USN
Commanding Officer, E Company	LCdr John H. Cheffey, USN (to 15 Oct)
	Lt (jg) Ernest N. Grover, USN (15-30 Oct)
	LCdr Charles K. Holloway, USN

1st Motor Transport Battalion

Commanding Officer	LtCol Olin L. Beall
Executive Officer	Maj John R. Barreiro, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company	Capt George B. Loveday
Commanding Officer, A Company	Capt Arthur W. Ecklund
Commanding Officer, B Company	Capt James C. Camp, Jr.
Commanding Officer, C Company	Capt Garfield M. Randall (to 30 Nov)
	1stLt Norman E. Stow
Commanding Officer, D Company	Capt Bernard J. Whitelock (9 Dec)
	1stLt Philip R. Hade
Commanding Officer, Automotive Maintenance Company	Maj Edward L. Roberts
Commanding Officer, Automotive Supply Company	1stLt Mildridge E. Mangum
Commanding Officer, Amphibian Truck Company, FMF ³	Capt John Bookhout

1st Ordnance Battalion

Commanding Officer	Maj Lloyd O. Williams
Executive Officer	Maj Samuel A. Johnstone, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company	Capt Theodore Tunis (to 13 Nov)
	Capt Gordon H. Moore
Commanding Officer, Ordnance Supply Company	Capt Russel S. LaPointe (to 5 Dec)
	1stLt Victor F. Brown
Commanding Officer, Ammunition Company	Capt Harvey W. Gagner (to 30 Nov)
	1stLt Charles H. Miller
Commanding Officer, Ordnance Maintenance Company	Capt George L. Williams

1st Service Battalion

Commanding Officer	LtCol Charles L. Banks
Executive Officer	Maj John R. Stone

³ Redesignated Company A, 1st Amphibian Truck Battalion, 15 Nov.

- Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Company Capt Morse "L" Holladay
- Commanding Officer,
Service Company Capt Robert A. Morehead
- Commanding Officer,
Support Company Capt Richard W. Sinclair (to 27 Oct)
Capt Thomas M. Sagar

1st Shore Party Battalion

- Commanding Officer LtCol Henry P. Crowe
- Executive Officer LtCol Horace H. Figuers
- Commanding Officer, Headquarters and
Service Company Capt William T. Miller
- Commanding Officer, A Company ... Maj William L. Batchelor (to 22 Nov)
Capt Nathaniel H. Carver
- Commanding Officer, B Company ... Maj Henry Brzezinski
- Commanding Officer C Company ... Maj George A. Smith (to 24 Nov)
Maj Murray F. Rose

1st Signal Battalion

- Commanding Officer Maj Robert L. Schreier
- Executive Officer Maj Elwyn M. Stimson
- Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Company Capt Howard K. Alberts (to 14 Nov)
Capt Earl F. Stanley
- Commanding Officer,
Signal Company Maj Richard A. Glaeser
- Commanding Officer, ANGLICO ... Maj Fulton L. Oglesby (to 16 Nov)
Maj Frederick M. Steinhauser

1st Tank Battalion

- Commanding Officer LtCol Harry T. Milne
- Executive Officer Maj Douglas E. Haberlie (to 1 Dec)
Maj Philip C. Morrell
- Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Company Capt Bruce W. Clarke (to 18 Nov)
1stLt Frederick L. Adams
- Commanding Officer,
Service Company Capt Philip C. Morell (to 1 Dec)
Maj Douglas E. Haberlie
- Commanding Officer, A Company ... Capt Gearl M. English (to 1 Dec)
1stLt Robert J. Craig
- Commanding Officer, B Company ... Capt Bruce F. Williams
- Commanding Officer, C Company ... Capt Richard M. Taylor
- Commanding Officer, D Company ... Capt Lester T. Chase (to 18 Nov)
Capt Bruce W. Clarke (19 Nov-10 Dec)
1stLt Paul E. Sanders

*The Chosin Reservoir Campaign**7th Motor Transport Battalion*

Commanding Officer	Maj Joseph F. Stepka (to 7 Nov)
	LtCol Carl J. Cagle
Executive Officer	Maj Vernon A. Tuson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company	1stLt Reed T. King
Commanding Officer, A Company	Capt Ira N. Hayes
Commanding Officer, B Company	Capt Clovis M. Jones
Commanding Officer, C Company	Capt Fred B. Rogers
Commanding Officer, D Company	Capt Joseph L. Bunker

Marine Observation Squadron 6

(Under operational control of 1stMarDiv and administrative control of 1stMAW)

Commanding Officer	Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk
Executive Officer	Capt Victor A. Armstrong (to 13 Nov)
	Capt Andrew L. McVickers

1ST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

Commanding General	MajGen Field Harris
Assistant Commanding General	BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman
Chief of Staff	Col Kenneth H. Weir (8 Oct-1 Nov)
	Col Caleb T. Bailey (2 Nov-15 Dec)
Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations ⁴	Col Edward C. Dyer
G-1	Col Raymond E. Hopper
G-2	LtCol Winsor V. Crockett, Jr.
G-3	LtCol Howard A. York (to 9 Nov)
	LtCol Paul J. Fontana (10 Nov-28 Nov) ⁵
	LtCol Howard A. York (29 Nov-15 Dec)
G-4	Col Thomas J. Noon
Commanding Officer, Rear Echelon, Itami	Col Roger T. Carleson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron, One	Capt Earl "B" Sumerlin, Jr.

Marine Aircraft Group 12

Commanding Officer	Col Boeker C. Batterton
Deputy Group Commander	LtCol Paul J. Fontana
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron 12	Maj John E. Hays

⁴ Also Deputy C/S, Air Support, X Corps.

⁵ Additional duty.

Commanding Officer,
Service Squadron 12 Maj Claude H. Welch (to 4 Nov)
Maj Charles E. J. McLean

Marine Aircraft Group 33

Commanding Officer Col Frank C. Dailey
Deputy Group Commander LtCol Radford C. West
Commanding Officer,
Headquarters Squadron 33 Capt Walter "L" Hilton
Commanding Officer,
Marine Service Squadron 33 LtCol James C. Lindsay

Squadrons

Commanding Officer,
Marine Fighter Squadron 212 LtCol Richard W. Wyczawski
Commanding Officer,
Marine Fighter Squadron 214 Maj Robert P. Keller (to 20 Nov)
Maj William M. Lundin
Commanding Officer,
Marine Fighter Squadron 312 LtCol "J" Frank Cole
Commanding Officer, Marine
Fighter Squadron 311 LtCol Neil R. McIntyre (from 8 Nov)
Commanding Officer,
Marine Fighter Squadron 323 Maj Arnold A. Lund
Commanding Officer, Marine
All-Weather Squadron 513 Maj J. Hunter Reinburg (to 4 Nov)
LtCol David C. Wolfe
Commanding Officer, Marine
All-Weather Fighter Squadron 542 LtCol Max J. Volcansek, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Marine
Transport Squadron 152 Col Deane C. Roberts
Commanding Officer,
Marine Ground Control
Intercept Squadron 1 Maj Harold E. Allen
Commanding Officer,
Marine Tactical Air
Control Squadron 2 Maj Christian C. Lee

APPENDIX G

Enemy Order of Battle

1. North Korean

During operations around Wonsan the 1st Marine Division encountered fragments and stragglers from many NKPA divisions. The organized elements were chiefly from the 2d, 5th, and 15th Divisions.

2. Chinese

42d Army

124th Division

370th Regiment

371st Regiment

372nd Regiment

In action against 7th Marines south of Sudong 2 Nov. Badly cut up in actions of 3-6 Nov.

125th Division

373rd Regiment

374th Regiment

375th Regiment

Not in contact. Probably to west of 124th Division.

126th Division

376th Regiment

377th Regiment

378th Regiment

Screened Chinese retreat to Hagaru. Never heavily engaged.

20th Army

58th Division

172nd Regiment

173rd Regiment

174th Regiment

First in action at Hagaru 28 Nov. Badly cut up in attacks on Hagaru.

59th Division

175th Regiment

176th Regiment

177th Regiment

In contact with 7th Marines southwest of Yudam-ni 23 Nov. Later defended Toktong Pass.

60th Division

178th Regiment

179th Regiment

180th Regiment

In contact with 7th Marines southeast of Yudam-ni 25 Nov. Later moved to Funchilin Pass area.

89th Division

266th Regiment

267th Regiment

268th Regiment

First contacted by 7th Marines west of Hagaru 22 Nov. About 2 Dec moved south to Majon-dong area.

27th Army

79th Division

235th Regiment

236th Regiment

237th Regiment

Attacked Yudam-ni 27 Nov.

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 80th Division | Attacked 7th Infantry Division units east of Reservoir 27 Nov. |
| 238th Regiment | |
| 239th Regiment | |
| 240th Regiment | |
| 81st Division | No report of contact until 13 Dec. May have been in Yudam-ni area. |
| 241st Regiment | |
| 242nd Regiment | |
| 243rd Regiment | |
| 90th Division | No contact reported. May have been in reserve near Hagaru. |
| 268th Regiment | |
| 269th Regiment | |
| 270th Regiment | |
| 26th Army | First contacts east of Hagaru 5 Dec. Suffered heavy losses around Koto-ri. |
| 76th Division | |
| 226th Regiment | |
| 227th Regiment | |
| 228th Regiment | |
| 77th Division | First contacts at Hagaru 5 Dec. |
| 229th Regiment | |
| 230th Regiment | |
| 231st Regiment | |
| 78th Division | Not reported in contact. May not have reached area in time for combat. |
| 232nd Regiment | |
| 233rd Regiment | |
| 234th Regiment | |
| 88th Division | Not reported in contact. May not have reached area in time for combat. |
| 263rd Regiment | |
| 264th Regiment | |
| 265th Regiment | |

APPENDIX H

Air Evacuation Statistics¹

Date	HAGARU			KOTO-RI			YUDAM- NI		Total
	OY	C-47	HO4S	OY	C-47	HO4S	OY	HO4S	
27Nov50----	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	21
28Nov50----	24	0	18	0	0	0	0	32	74
29Nov50----	31	0	16	0	0	0	0	22	69
30Nov50----	62	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	111
1Dec50----	52	157	2	0	0	7	1	3	222
2Dec50----	0	960	0	47	0	0	0	0	1,007
3Dec50----	0	464	0	53	0	0	2	4	523
4Dec50----	0	1,046	0	89	0	0	0	0	1,135
5Dec50----	0	1,580	0	48	0	2	0	0	1,630
6Dec50----	0	137	0	0	0	3	0	0	140
7Dec50----	0	0	0	226	0	6	0	0	232
8Dec50----	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	19
9Dec50----	0	0	0	21	277	2	0	0	300
10Dec50----	0	0	0	0	8	4	0	0	12
Totals-----	188	4,344	36	484	304	24	3	112	5,493

¹ X Corps, *Special Report, Chosin Reservoir*, 93; Smith, *Notes*, 844; and VMO-6 SAR, 13-18.
TBM evacuation included under OY for Koto-ri, 2 to 7 December 1950.

APPENDIX I

Unit Citations

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FIRST MARINE DIVISION, REINFORCED

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against enemy aggressor forces in the Chosin Reservoir and Koto-ri area of Korea from 27 November to 11 December 1950. When the full fury of the enemy counterattack struck both the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps on 27 and 28 November 1950, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, operating as the left flank division of the Tenth Corps, launched a daring assault westward from Yudam-ni in an effort to cut the road and rail communications of hostile forces attacking the Eighth Army and, at the same time, continued its mission of protecting a vital main supply route consisting of a tortuous mountain road running southward to Chinhung-ni, approximately 35 miles distant. Ordered to withdraw to Hamhung in company with attached army and other friendly units in the face of tremendous pressure in the Chosin Reservoir area, the Division began an epic battle against the bulk of the enemy Third Route Army and, while small intermediate garrisons at Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri held firmly against repeated and determined attacks by hostile forces, gallantly fought its way successively to Hagaru-ri, Koto-ri, Chinhung-ni and Hamburg over twisting, mountainous and icy roads in sub-zero temperatures. Battling desperately night and day in the face of almost insurmountable odds throughout a period of two weeks of intense and sustained combat, the First Marine Division, reinforced, emerged from its ordeal as a fighting unit with its wounded, with its guns and equipment and with its prisoners, decisively defeating seven enemy divisions, together with elements of three others, and inflicting major losses which seriously impaired the military effectiveness of the hostile forces for a considerable period of time. The valiant fighting spirit, relentless perseverance and heroic fortitude of the officers and men of the First Marine Division, Reinforced, in battle against a vastly outnumbering enemy, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

The following reinforcing units of the First Marine Division participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 27 November to 11 December 1950:

ORGANIC UNITS OF THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION: First Marine Division (less Detachment Headquarters Battalion; Detachment First Signal Battalion; Detach-

ment First Service Battalion; Detachment Headquarters and Companies A and C, First Tank Battalion; Automotive Supply Company, First Motor Transport Battalion; Automotive Maintenance Company, First Motor Transport Battalion; Detachment First Ordnance Battalion; Detachment Headquarters and Company A, First Medical Battalion; First Shore Party Battalion; 4.5" Rocket Battery and Service Battery, Fourth Battalion, Eleventh Marines).

ATTACHED MARINE CORPS UNITS: Companies A and B, Seventh Motor Transport Battalion; Detachment Radio Relay Platoon.

ATTACHED ARMY UNITS: Provisional Battalion (Detachments, 31st and 32nd Regimental Combat Teams); Company D, 10th Engineer Combat Battalion; Tank Company, 31st Infantry Regiment; Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment; Company B, 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment (less Company E); 185th Engineer Combat Battalion (less Company A).

For the President,

R. B. ANDERSON

Secretary of the Navy

GENERAL ORDERS

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

No. 72

Washington 25, D. C., 9 August 1951

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION

1. The 1st Marine Air Wing, Fleet Marine Force, is cited for outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy in the areas of Chosin Reservoir, Hagaru-ri, and Koto-ri, Korea, during the period 22 November to 14 December 1950. The historic role of close-support air missions flown by personnel on land and carrier based aircraft during the operations of the X Corps, United States Army, contributed immeasurably to the successful withdrawal of the X Corps when hordes of Chinese Communist and North Korean troops had encircled their positions endangering the entire operation. In their magnificent employment of close-support doctrine and in their exceedingly effective interdiction missions and night combat air patrols, the 1st Marine Air Wing flew 2,572 day and night sorties during this period, inflicting 10,313 enemy casualties and destroying 723 buildings, 144 vehicles, 17 tanks, 9 bridges, 4 locomotives, 3 command posts, 30 boxcars, 47 gun positions, and 19 supply, ammunition, and fuel dumps. These missions were flown over hazardous mountain terrain under extremely adverse weather conditions and in the face of intense enemy antiaircraft and small-arms fire. The normally ground-based Tactical Air Direction Center was ingeniously improvised into an airborne center in a C-54 aircraft without appreciable loss of efficiency in operations and the responsibility for controlling aircraft was assumed and accomplished in a remarkable manner through day and night operations by controlling personnel. Airborne tactical air coordinators also were established to supplement the airborne center to direct specific strikes in areas not under surveillance of ground control parties to the end that every available sortie was utilized to maximum effectiveness. In the evacuation of friendly casualties by cargo airplanes, the use of helicopters for rescue of air personnel shot down by the enemy and the evacuation of wounded, and the high state of aircraft availability maintained by ground personnel working under hazardous and extremely adverse conditions because of intense cold, personnel of the entire 1st Marine Air Wing displayed fortitude, courage, and marked esprit de corps. Although suffering a considerable loss of personnel and equipment during this trying period, the morale and effectiveness of the 1st Marine Air Wing were sustained at a constantly high level. The repeated acts of valor and gallantry by the officers and men of the 1st Marine Air Wing, Fleet Marine Force, and their enviable combat record reflect great credit on the members thereof and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service.

By order of the Secretary of the Army:

J. LAWTON COLLINS

Chief of Staff, United States Army

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Annexes

- A G-1
- B G-2
- C G-3
- D G-4
- E Medical
- F Special Services
- G Legal
- H Communications
- I VMR-152
- J Marine Air Group 33

Appendixes

- A S-1
- B S-2
- C S-3
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- E Communications
- F Logistics
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- H Public Information
- I Buildings and Ground
- J Ordnance
- K Transportation
- L Chaplain
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- N Photographic Unit
- O Engineering
- P Aerology
- Q VMF-214
- R VMF-212

- S VMF-323
- K Marine Air Group 12
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 - A Personnel
 - B Intelligence
 - C Operations
 - D Logistics
 - E Supply
 - F VMF-311
 - G VMF-312
 - H VMF(N)-513
 - I VMF(N)-542
 - J MTACS-2
 - K MGCIS-1
 - L Engineering
 - M Ordnance
 - N Electronics
 - O Transportation
 - P Special Services
 - Q Mess
 - R Utilities
 - S Communications
 - T Medical
 - U Base Security
 - V Commanding Officer's Comments

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Annexes

- A G-1
- B G-2
- C G-3
- D G-4
- E Adjutant
- F Anti-tank
- G Chaplain
- H Chemical Warfare and Radiological Defense
- I Dental

J	Embarkation
K	Engineer
L	Headquarters Commandant
M	Food Director
N	Historical
O	Inspector
P	Legal
Q	Medical
R	Motor Transport
S	Ordnance
T	Post Exchange
U	Public Information
V	Signal
W	Special Services
X	Supply
Y	Disbursing
Z	Civil Affairs
AA	Division Administration Center
BB	Fire Support Coordination Center
CC	Air and Air Observers
DD	Naval Gunfire
EE	Headquarters Battalion
FF	1st Service Battalion
GG	1st Signal Battalion
HH	1st Medical Battalion
II	1st Motor Transport Battalion
JJ	1st Amphibian Truck Company
LL	1st Ordnance Battalion
MM	1st Shore Party Battalion
NN	1st Engineer Battalion
OO	1st Tank Battalion
PP	1st Marines
QQ	5th Marines
RR	7th Marines
SS	11th Marines
TT	1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion
UU	1st Combat Service Group
VV	7th Motor Transport Battalion
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